

# Sewanee Review

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[No. 4

OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1934

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| Vol. VII  | Number 1.        |
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OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1934

# Sewanee Review

[Founded 1892]

EDITED BY  
WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER

## ASIDES AND SOLILOQUIES

ALTHOUGH the *SEWANEE REVIEW* is not strictly regionalist, it has always stimulated creative writing in the South and has continuously published essays on themes relating to the South and poems by Southerners which reflect Southern feeling and traditions. Among other notable achievements, it has been quick to sense new stirrings of the creative impulse and has, indeed, during the last ten years provided the means of publication for Southern writers now commanding widespread deference. The Agrarian movement was launched in these pages by Mr. John Crowe Ransom's now-famous essay, "The South—Old or New" which in the rephrased form of "Reconstructed but Unregenerate" introduces the Southern symposium, *I'll Take My Stand*. The Agrarians, having been adopted by the New York publication, *The American Review*, continue their propaganda for the restitution of what they conceive to be "the Southern way of life" in the pages of that esteemed periodical. Doubtless, they will again appear in the pages of this Quarterly when occasion arises.

The literary distinction of the Agrarians has given them a position in American letters which is unparalleled in our history. Their characteristics as an orchestrated group differ from those of similar group movements such as the Transcendentalists of New

England, the Tractarians of Oxford, or the Pre-Raphaelites of the late Victorian era. From the time when they published their poetry in their notable magazine *The Fugitives* to the present, they have revealed a remarkable consistency of attitude and the development of a literary strategy and technique which is peculiarly their own. They have worked from within a legacy of cultural tradition of their region and, without servile transmission of literary tones and subjects of the Southern past, have developed that tradition by their own independent power and talent. No one not a member of their group could hope to write its full history: perhaps only John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, or Allan Tate could do so. Though this Quarterly has always been sceptical of the direction of Nashville Agrarians' ideology and has frequently questioned the correspondence of their definitions of the Southern mind and past with the fullness and variety of the available sources it has continuously respected their creative intention and has deliberately launched its criticism of Agrarian definitions and proposals under the conviction that only through criticism could the sources be reworked and the Agrarians expand their present interpretations of Southern possibilities. The time has arrived for some history of the Nashville Movement to be published; perhaps there would be no more appropriate place than in the pages of this periodical where its later phase was given its first opportunity of articulation. An invitation, then, is hereby publicly extended to Mr. Donald Davidson (who, in *Culture in the South* stated that the *SEWANEE REVIEW* was "lively but obtuse" in its attitude to Southern writers) to write the history of the Fugitive and Agrarian Movements: or, if this seems too "lively and obtuse", an invitation is extended to him, to Mr. John Crowe Ransom, or to Mr. Allan Tate to edit one issue of this Quarterly and to devote it entirely to the history, definitions, achievements, and directions of their movement.

**T**HE Fugitives, unlike similar movements, have left their impression and influence on younger Southern writers. They created a literary idiom so peculiar and attractive that their signature may be seen in the diction, themes, metaphors, and general ontological aesthetic of poets elsewhere—in the United States and

in England. Obviously, also in the South and especially on poets educated in Vanderbilt University who have passed under the personal influence of Messrs. Ransom, Davidson, or Robert Penn Warren. This Quarterly experimented two or three years ago in printing some of the work of two of these younger Southern poets: Mr. Marshall Morgan and Mr. William Davidson. The selection became in effect a little poetry magazine occupying a space of its own within the larger confines of a Quarterly. The experiment proved so happy in its results that it is being continued in this issue with the group of versed epigrams by "Matthew Urban" who, though not influenced in any way by the Fugitives, is a Virginian of wit and understanding. In the next issue (January-March, 1935) will appear another group of poems by a Southern poet (and he one of the original Nashville group whose poetry appeared first, exclusive of the movement's organ *The Fugitive*, in the SEWANEE REVIEW: Merrill Moore.) In April, 1935, a third selection of poems by a Southern poet will appear in one of these little poetry magazines bound in the pages of this periodical: *These Fragments* by G. Marion O'Donnell of Memphis, Tennessee. Space is being reserved in the October, 1935 issue for a fourth group of poems by a Southern poet.

**D**OUBTLESS, this experimentation is "lively"—but is it obtuse? Obtuseness may mean hostility or indifference. The only novelty about this activity of the SEWANEE REVIEW is the publicizing aspect of its incessant eagerness to sustain the flowering of Southern literary talent. Hitherto, it has worked quietly by means of private correspondence and it has not abandoned that device. The flights of the editor to different parts of the South to discover promising talent and to confer with those who "know what is going on" have been made with some sacrifice in the life of one who is primarily a college professor. The number of provocative letters he has himself typed will, if and when rescued, establish him as the most voluminous and fluent correspondent of all time. All this is very lively but not at all obtuse—in the sense of hostility or indifference to the encouragement of creative letters in the South.

SO, under the general rubric of "lively" but not "obtuse" interest in stirrings of the literary impulse in the South, some word may now be said of a little known but active group of Southerners in Memphis, Tennessee, who deserve to be better known in the South and elsewhere. For the last two years, a little literary magazine has been published in Memphis called *The Observer*. It has published poetry, short stories, one-act plays, and literary criticism of a special pungency and effect. It is the organ of a group of writers who prefer publishing their own work and so avoid the exhausting expense of energy in submitting it to periodicals of wide circulation. The Memphis group of writers has sufficient importance to warrant a critical essay of some length in this Quarterly, but for the time being a mere sketch of the chief personalities must suffice. First in importance is Richmond Croom Beatty who, after a college career in Birmingham-Southern College (where he was influenced by Gilbert Mead, now President of Washington College, Maryland), proceeded to the Graduate School of Vanderbilt University at the time when the Agrarians were initiating their crusade and came under the personal influence of one of the most trenchant yet charming of the Agrarian Group: John Donald Wade, author of *The Life of General Longstreet*, *John Wesley*, and "The Life and Death of Cousin Lucius." Beatty and Wade had the urbane temperament which enabled them slyly to detect the factitious tendency of the Agrarians; and, though both accepted the Agrarian frame of reference, humorously worked away from it in their occasional compositions. Some indication of this may be seen in the poetry of Mr. Beatty already published in these pages. In his prose published in *The Observer*, he has written with an unusual fund of knowledge, considerable energy and directness, definite critical principles (analysis of which would disclose a coherent and reticulated philosophy) and a store of common sense that restrains him from flying off after the latest fads. Easily accessible to the general reader is his slyly whimsical and gently unheroic biographical criticism of *William Byrd of Westover*, which was possibly motivated by the factitious legend of the Agrarian concept of the Old South. Though Mr. Beatty has never been on the editorial board of *The Observer*, he has always advised the board, frequently castigated it, sometimes altered its course of action.

Then there is Theodore C. Hoepfner: of German descent, he has a remarkably hard head. His balance and sanity make him at once delightful as a conversationalist, not given to Southern ecstasies or rhodomontades and is an intellectually healthy critic. Though he has not yet published a book, his criticisms (mostly published in the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* during Miss Monte Cooper's first period as its literary editor) are trenchant and just; and his knowledge of William Blake qualifies him as an authority on that mystic and poet. Mr. Hoepfner seems, like so many other informed people, to be uninterested in publishing his work; doubtless, the gumshoeing and tactics necessitated by prevailing publishing conditions are obnoxious to him: he is indeed a person who really writes because writing gives him pleasure: and who proves that fact very consistently by refraining from what he calls "the overt act of publishing".

The four other editors of *The Observer* owe much to the advice and stimulus of Messrs. Beatty and Hoepfner, though each is sufficiently independent to do his own work in his own way. Harvey Scott Hincks, of Providence, Rhode Island, has had wide experience in his field (the Drama) in this country and in Europe. He has published a volume of one-act plays, he has just finished a long play, and he is now working on a novel. Blane Treadway and M. Irwin Carlson are both interested in Communism and in literature as propaganda for the class struggle. G. Marion O'Donnell has been strongly influenced by Mr. Beatty; and, since he has been, perhaps, the most energetic and persistent of the younger members of the editorial board, he becomes the link connecting, through Beatty, the Memphis with the Nashville groups of writers.

The Fugitive and Agrarian technique developed in Nashville by Mr. Sidney Mttron-Hirsch, John Crowe Ransom and the rest shows obvious influence in the Memphis group. The Memphis *Observers* meet frequently and informally to discuss contemporary literature and to read their own work for discussion and criticism. Others, besides those already named, met with the group but these were the center. Then, one night some one in the group pointed out that of the number of so-called "little magazines" published in America, the only one in the South is *Contempo* which was criticized as apparently too much occupied with "mere fads". The

success of *The Double Dealer* was recalled; also *The Reviewer* and *The Fugitive*. After some discussion the group at length decided to publish a little magazine from Memphis, and *The Observer* was the result. Of course, finances constituted an important problem, but the editors, from time to time, happened to have a little money, so they started out bravely enough. Six issues have been published so far. Contributions have been welcomed from anywhere; selections being made on their effectiveness and no test of the economic or social principles of the writers was exacted. Contributions are judged as literature and solely as literature. Young Southern writers who had not yet found their audience were especially invited to contribute. There was no group programme: the temperaments and the beliefs of the members of the group were much too varied to permit agreement on a manifesto, even if the group had thought a manifesto desirable. Once it was under way, other Memphis writers contributed: Mr. John Newton Oldham (whose essay "A Matter of Idiom" is printed in this issue), Dr. A. Theodore Johnson of Southwestern College and Mr. Albert Russell Erskine, Jr., reviewed books; Mr. Erle Howry twice contributed verse, and Miss Monte Cooper also published two poems in *The Observer*.

WHETHER or not *The Observer* will continue as a Southern independent literary organ is at the moment problematical. The SEWANEE REVIEW in this brief notice of it and of the group supporting it hopes that, as in the instance of the *Fugitive*, it will attract the attention of benefactors in Memphis or elsewhere in the South, and that subscriptions may be sent to the editors of *The Observer*, care of Mr. G. Marion O'Donnell, 120 Church Street, Belzoni, Mississippi. If sufficient Southern support be given this sparkling periodical, perhaps the editors will be encouraged to rectify their failure to emphasize their Southern character (not aggressively, with waving of the Stars and Bars, but quietly) and to avoid imitation of the little magazines which are interested only in proletarian writers or in typographically and mentally gymnastic experimenters. *Absit omen!*

*by June Purcell Guild*

## WHY GO SOUTH? A PRESCRIPTION FOR PATRIOTISM

THE locale to which the exigencies of married life called me several years ago is that portion of the United States lying south of the Mason and Dixon Line, the exact spot the city of Queensborough, shall we say? Internationalism may still seem more civilized than patriotism but living below the Line has made a patriot of me, at least, temporarily. But should my present feeling of unusual loyalty to the States, the American flag, and the federal constitution prove transitory, could any internationalism of mine again include in the same category, the "Northern Nation" and the South which fired my patriotism? That question surely raises some amusing psychological implications . . . .

This then is the story of my conversion to Americanism. I am not sure it has any significance not purely personal. On the other hand, it may contain a moral for those who recommend tear-gas bombs and machine guns for the development of 100 per cent. Americans.

On the whole, I was rather pleased when we decided to go South. My social-working husband delighted in pioneering, and I always made satisfactory adjustments for myself. We had moved before and made friends easily East or West. The prospect of living where winters are mild and short appealed. Besides, there was a distinct glamour about going to live in the land of the magnolia, azalea, mimosa, where old mansions and boxwood gardens abound, where the utilitarian farm is a plantation, and age and history make living an adventure. There was an attraction, too, in famed Southern hospitality, courtesy, culture, in its uniform Anglo-Saxon heritage that needs no forcible Americanization programs. Let all Northerners take note: These

things are in and of the South, they do make living there pleasanter.

The South was the romantic, story-book South to me as I am sure it is to most Northerners. Before going there to live I had been in the South only once and then for a short time one beautiful far-away Spring—and Spring makes an unbelievable fairyland of the South. True, the South was also that part of the United States where long ago there had been slavery and the Civil War; they had taught me that much in school. Then, my mother had told me when I was a child about the war service of grandfather and four uncles, of the suffering of kin in Libby prison, of the financial disaster which overtook the family because of the war. The stories were interesting but they were simply stories, tales of a long ago that had nothing to do with me as a person or with my feelings about my country today. That Civil War business was finished. Any Northerner will understand what I mean; it did not concern my life or touch my emotions or prejudices any more than the Mexican War concluded thirteen years before the Civil War. After living in the heart of the Confederacy for several years that objective reaction to the Civil War now seems inexplicable although it is the typical present-generation attitude of the North to all past wars. Big Bill Thompson's lively hatred and fear of England's king is a very funny joke . . . Down South to my great delight I hear people of my own age and era casually talk of the days "befo de wah" when they do not mean before the World War but "before the Civil War," or, should I say, in spite of the great Lee's own terminology, "before the War Between the States?"—Incidentally, before living in the South the desire of the Ladies of the Confederacy to have Congress officially change the name of the Civil War or War of the Rebellion to the War Between the States would have been quite all right with me I am sure. Now that I am become an American Patriot I am not so sure . . .

It is trite to say its *Present* is more important to the North than its *Past*. The reverse is true for the South and that explains many things. People living North of the Line think of the South simply as an old, historic, beautiful, gallant part of the Nation, substantially in the same way as they think of New England as an old, historic, thrifty part, or as Easterners think of the West as a new, scenic, rapidly-developing part. That is to say, people

living in the North think of the people living in the South as American in language, thinking, feeling, acting. It is fairer, perhaps, to say that Northerners take the South and its Americanism naïvely for granted; in fact, they don't think about it at all. There is no speculation about the loyalty of Maine, North Dakota, or Oregon. Why about Virginia, for instance? The truth of the matter is the Civil War and slavery as topics for conversation and consideration in the North are as dead as sixteen to one, before the Depression. The average Northerner apparently thinks it rather bad form to discuss the family brawls of his grandfather, as the old man himself believed his troubles settled almost seventy years ago.

The complacency of the North concerning the Americanism of the South, the ignorance of the average Northerner about Southern conditions and psychology is astonishing, even lamentable. With the world sinking in doom, what of it? The answer is anything but clear. But anyway, learning the truth has been a heavy blow to my intellectual self-respect and has goaded me into a self-defensive patriotism.

Nevertheless, to translate the psychological effect of a Southern environment on an adult North-American into a definite and certain bill of particulars is difficult. Many facts and situations disturbing in their Southern setting seem trivial when removed from that aura. One cannot say: *This* is the thing about the South and Southerners which is so upsetting; *This* is why the South seems so foreign to an American; or *This* is the reason why the South is not what you North-Americans think. It can only be said that the cumulative effect of a series of stimuli operating in a completely strange and Southern atmosphere has destroyed internationalism and produced patriotism in one North-American. Let it be added at once that I take back nothing concerning the beauty, the historic appeal, the glamour, if you will, of the South. They are there, on all sides. Yes, and abundant cordiality and good manners, too. But never can the Southerner and the Northerner meet in perfect understanding. Exiled Northerners all admit this to one another; however long they have resided in the South they never quite bridge the gap. Psychologically, they remain outlanders, whether leaders or onlookers. They may admire, applaud, or participate, yet never really belong, never have

a comfortable certainty of their welcome. No blame attaches to anyone, least of all, perhaps, to the Southerner, for this psychic phenomenon; it is merely a fact to be noted.

Trouble starts as soon as the Northerner opens his mouth, in the South. One can't be there a day without being made to feel conscious of his speech defects. You may have passed in the East or West inconspicuously enough as a person of average education and culture. Not so in the courteous South; there your peculiarities or *differences* in dialect and diction become "crude", "uncouth", "midwestern." Sales "ladies" in the stores ask immediately, "What part of the country you-all come from?" or, "Is your home in Boston?" Others look at you somewhat skeptically when you give a local street address and say, "How you-all like it here and how long you-all expect to stay?" So right away there comes that feeling of *not belonging*. That sort of thing has happened to me so often that occasionally when it does not, I wonder for a moment if I've gone Southern. Once a salesperson said after I had briefly explained that "my home is in Queensborough," "Why, you-all don't talk the way I do." I replied, no doubt a bit irritably, "No, but I am not sorry for that." And quick as lightning she came back, "Why how can you-all say such a thing? It must be dreadful not to be a Southerner!" Thus it does not take long to become conscious of one's foreign accent and another defense mechanism is aborning.

It isn't only the shopgirls who feel and talk strongly about accents. A "real Southern Lady" said recently to a plain college woman from the North: "Oh, I just do not know what to do about my child. I am so worried about his accent since he has been playing with your child." In this case the Northern dialect seems to be winning over the Southern although sometimes little Northern children are corrupted by their early Southern environment to the hilarious amusement of their Northern parents.

By no means, let it be understood, are all Southerners frankly rude about the crude talk and harsh voices of Northerners. They just let it be discovered in a disconcerting way that many of them are oh so horribly hurt by midwestern vulgarisms. For instance, they will regale you at length on the inadequacies of midwesterners as gentlefolk. Then on learning, quite inadvertently, of course, that their auditor spent years in that section and even

admits to having been born there, they will gallantly bring forth something like this; "Why really I never met anyone from Ohio a bit like you before. Why, no, I never was in that part of the country, I've never been out of Queensborough except to go to the beach but I had no idea midwesterners were at all like you." All of which equals good manners, a compliment, or a joke, depending on one's temperament.

Once at a large social gathering of Southern ladies and gentlemen, the genuine F. F. V. kind, you know, they entirely forgot,—I gladly concede that much to Southern courtesy,—that there was a lone outlander present. The host, a man of wealth, education, social position, launched into an eloquent description of a road-show which had recently played the city and concluded in a voice much under the average Southern voice in quality; "Yes, that play would have been very enjoyable had it not been for the awful Northern dialects. As it was, I had to come right home and wash out my ears." All the guests—except the Northerner who tried to keep very quiet the rest of the evening—enthusiastically concurred in the verdict that the play had been completely ruined because of "the harsh voices of the Northern actors."

Many Southern voices are indeed charming. It is easy to be wrong but are there not some beautiful voices even up above the Line? The point here is that education and training—as well as local custom and tradition—have something to do with voice culture, and by no means are all Southern voices full, soft, and perfectly modulated. On the contrary, a great many Southerners certainly do seem to talk distinctly in the manner known in the North as "through the nose". It is unlikely, however, that any Northerner would be so rude as to comment on that distressing fact to any individual Southerner. Unquestionably it would shock and amaze most Southerners to be told that the Southern drawl is not always bewitching to the unaccustomed ear. Strangely enough, the omission of "r," the dropping of the final "g," the occasional injection of an unexpected "y" produces in some persons a dialect which not only sounds suspiciously illiterate but is actually difficult for a North-American to understand at first. Truth compels me to add that not all Southerners are addicted to the ultra extreme form of Southern dialect; in fact mild fun is poked at the language extremists by other good Southerners who

do not make a fetish of their sectional peculiarities. So far as I have been able to discover they all agree, though, that the Southern people speak a "genuine Elizabethan English". Why that should be a matter of pride in 20th Century U. S. A.? I have not had the courage to ask; nor have I made any research to determine the truth of the statement. Again, I imply no criticism, I state only the fact. May I quote here from a recent book review by a very well known Southerner writing on "the excellence of Virginian English"?

The causes of this excellence are not far to seek. The influence and the traditions of the past, the continuity—that is until relatively recent times—of Virginian culture, stretching back unbroken to the time of Elizabeth are among the principal influences which developed and preserved the beauty of Virginian speech.

Am I right in remembering that "aint" was more regular in Elizabeth's day than our own? Certainly many Southern ladies and gentlemen use the word with the fluency of street urchins. "Aint that Mr. Cyarter and Miss Wallasteen ridin' in Mr. Pash's cyar?" When interpreted this means: "Isn't that Mr. Carter and Mrs. Wallerstein riding in Mr. Parrish's car?"—I readily admit that many Northerners lack the self confidence to use the handy "aint." At the same time I insist with some merriment that it is a trifling thing to brag about during a world-wide Depression. Really, on the printed page in the South "aint" is not more common than in the North.

Speech differences were inevitable in the days of sectional isolation but why should any of us become excited over them today, as though they confer distinction, in some mysterious way? Some of the more provincial Southerners believe they really do: For instance, "As far as the pronunciation of the English language goes, we are the people. When I call my neighbor 'Cyarter' and my girls 'gyrls' I am speaking my mother tongue as it was taught my forebears centuries ago. The Southerner traveling through the Northern States is in an agony of harsh accents—up there I make a point of being as thoroughly Old Dominionish as I know how to be, and bless you, how they eat it up, those Yankees. —When I hear of the shoals of them who come South winter after winter, I say to myself, 'It isn't so much the climate up there they

want to escape from as it is the harsh and rasping accents." Well, may be so, lady columnist, may be so, but Northern winters are actually less agreeable than Southern winters . . .

Far be it from me to complain of "you-all". There is something delightfully informal and chummy about the word or words which I rather like. Southerners themselves are so sensitive about the expression that outsiders cannot get quite used to it though, and feel almost disloyal to themselves when they use it. Southerners explain, again and again, that "you-all is never used in the singular by Southerners" but mean "all of you" and that Northerners are ignorant of the proper use of the term. It must be that Northerners have commented unkindly on the word or words . . . I hope not but I do not know . . . There must be some inbred reason why Southerners are so touchy on the subject. I think I am unbiased about "you-all". In fact, it seems to me that if there is any reason why "you-all" should be the plural of "you" in the South an educational campaign on its correct usage should be energetically promoted because vast numbers of Southerners ignorantly use "you-all" in the singular. The whole question of dialect is so unimportant in the universal scheme of things that it is mentioned here only because it is so constantly discussed down here . . . It is no crime, tort, or sin to talk as a Southerner talks. On the other hand why should it be a matter for rude comment to talk as a Northerner talks?

Again, I admit it, much of the shock which a Northerner experiences in the South is his own fault. He should be prepared but rarely is, for the unavoidable differences in feeling between Victor and Vanquished. Pride in language differences and many old and worn-out traditions antedating the Civil War persist in the Southerner's natural psychology of defeat. Few present-generation Americans know much more about the real issues of the Civil War than the causes of the Crimean War, or the World War, for that matter. Northerners, accordingly, have a feeling of remote intellectual interest, if any, in the Civil War. Naturally it is far easier to forget a glorious success than the agony of a crushing defeat. The North has stopped talking about and feeling the Civil War because it won. But the defeated South has developed a genuine inferiority complex regarding the victorious North and Northerners from which many future generations of Southerners

will doubtless continue to suffer. Most Northerners who have never lived in the Confederate South regard the villainies of reconstruction days tolerantly and abstractly, about as they do the scandals of the Ohio Gang. To the credit of the South may it be said that living there is likely to fill Northerners with a flaming shame for political brigandry of all sorts. At the same time, though, they are simply stupefied when well-educated Southerners use an argument like this: "Every true Southerner voted for Al Smith in 1928 because that was the first opportunity the South has had to repay Tammany Hall for helping the South during the Reconstruction." It is my conviction that true Southerners felt that way about Al Smith but at the same time they simply could not accept him because he dug so deeply into other sectional prejudices. As one lady said, "I can not bear to think of a Mr. and Mrs. Smith sitting where our own George and Mary once sat."

Northerners who have never lived in the South fail to remember that practically all of the Civil War was fought in Southern fields and Southern homes, many of which to this day bear the scars of the invading army. Northerners do not realize that the suffering and defeat of the South is alive in Southern hearts today because they experienced "the War" close at hand, and not vicariously. The souvenirs of that suffering and defeat remain before their eyes today in bullet holes, military cemeteries, and breastworks, in battered barns and ancestral halls, in devastated fields and current bills for Confederate pensions which they must pay from their empty 1934 pockets . . . Out of sight, out of mind holds good for wars . . . else the War to End War would have Ended War.

It must be added, many Southerners appear to have done little to erase the awful memories of the Civil War. North or South, not all have "serenity to accept what cannot be helped". It may be too much to expect a whole people to be as great in defeat as their great leader who said: "Recollect that we form one country now. Abandon all these local animosities and make your sons Americans." So many Southerners continue to tell and retell the ordinary war stories of ruin and vandalism, what dear grandma Stewart told them; what Cousin Lu Belle suffered; what Nancy's kinfolk lost. The stories are as true as most war stories and telling them follows a normal human pattern. The strange thing is

so few see that *always*, War is Like That. Many Southerners believe unquestionably to this day that all the agony and destruction of the Civil War resulted from the peculiar personal cruelty and effrontery of the barbarians from the North. The purpose of war is the organized destruction of life and property and the incidental ruin and misery of many only remotely involved. The Civil War, on both sides, had to be fought with the usual weapons of war or it would not have been ended today. Southerners seem to think that their grief and loss was due to the Individual Damned Yankee and only indirectly, if at all, to The War which they at least helped to cause and conduct. There has never been and never can be a war free from brutality and propaganda of atrocities on *both sides*. If the Confederates left fewer traces of their destruction on the North, it need only be remembered they failed to advance beyond Gettysburg.

Not the least irksome aspect of the Civil War psychology of the South for the stranger is bound up in the words, or word, Damned Yankee, used by people who insist on explaining time and again that only after they were grown did they learn there are two words and not one in the expression. Any joke becomes tiresome after its 'nth repetition. The common abbreviation of Damned Yankee to D. Y. indicates the familiar frequency with which the words are used by Southerners. An amusing example of the bitterness of many Southerners toward the D. Y. happened to me soon after my arrival in the South. An old gentleman working in a library was friendly and cordial; he joked and laughed; he offered to find certain books for me with fine gallantry; it almost seemed as though he would regard it as a real privilege to be of service. Of course I thanked him just as politely as I knew how but alas, in the only English I knew, a non-Southern dialect. His face simply froze with a kind of horror and he looked at me as though he saw for the first time that I was a kind of poisonous snake. Then, he said: "You-all a Yankee, aint yuh?" That was all and I stood there for a minute half-dazed, wondering what in Heaven's name I had done. Quickly I realized what a give-away my speech was and I chortled a bit weakly to myself. I had to look for my own books that day and thereafter too and have always felt a little nervous in that library since.

May be the old-timey chaps of an ancient generation are bound

to feel that way about Northerners. I don't mind them at all but what of the children? Well, the children carry on the South's traditions. "The Grandchildren's Chapter of So and So Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy will convene on Tuesday." Such newspaper headlines are common enough to explain a good deal. A Southern lady once said to me, "Our children are taught right from the beginning how they should feel about these things." No one could persuade me that all Southern people are training their children to distrust or dislike Northern people; anyway the automobile and the radio are bringing the two sections together again in spite of the unreconstructed ones. And yet a Southern acquaintance who would dearly love to be thought of as a modern liberal once told me that her five-year-old child on being asked by another child, "What is a bandit?" replied in a matter-of-fact tone, "Why a bandit is a Yankee." While appreciating the humor of the incident, I was able to restrain my mirth somewhat as the mother of the child immediately launched into a dissertation on Yankee brigandry as experienced by the kin of her husband, during "The War". You see even young and intelligent Southerners sometimes hug to their hearts the belief that the Damned Yankee with his wanton ferocity belonged to a special race of mankind and was not, is not, and never can be "a Christian gentleman". It comes down to this: in defeat there may be a kind of holy martyrdom; "They gave their lives *in the defense* of the South, of the constitution, liberty and the right to self government." . . . "To arms, to defend your homes and firesides against the invasion threatened by the Northern foes. Your state is in danger." Defeat for a cause so described in a Confederate handbill of April 1861 remains sweet . . .

Ah well, after all, Southern Civil War psychology cannot so easily be broken into normal categories. If the following incident does not lead into a blind psychological alley, let the gentle reader himself tell one. A Northerner with a patrician name, long lines of ancestors, and a sure enough Ph.D., was called to a position in a Southern college and carried along with him his equally pedigreed wife and offspring. It happened that the United Daughters were about to hold their annual conference in the village. And, believe it or not, they invited his offspring to march in their memorial parade and carry the stars and bars. The parents were

honored but having lived in the South only a few weeks and in the meantime, having acquired no Southern lineage and but little Southern sentiment, they hesitated, hoping for a writing on the wall or other miraculous deliverance. At last graciously and with rare tact they decided the walk would be too long for their little seven-year-old son. But were those United Daughters angry and did they tell the world that their invitation had been refused? Well as the D. Y. himself said afterward "Southern ladies' lips are swifter than the telegraph." Considering that the participation of the grandson of two Union soldiers in that procession could not have added anything to its idealism the only possible conclusion is: The eccentricities of human emotions can never be fathomed.

Far be it from me to expect Southerners to revere Lincoln or to believe him comparable in nobility or greatness to Robert E. Lee. On the other hand, is it unfair to expect cultured, educated people to know that history has absolved Lincoln from vindictiveness and petty meanness toward the South? No doubt many Southerners know that in their hearts but their generally expressed attitude toward Lincoln remains one of bitter hostility. In a small circulating library—this was before I learned that North is North and South is South—I asked for a popular biography of Lincoln and the clerk, very graciously volunteered the information that they "never carried any books about Lincoln, nor books by or about Negroes as they had no call for them". I have always suspected that that clerk was a Northerner and wanted to save me needless embarrassment in the future because she added, "many of Ellen Glasgow's novels are also unpopular here because Miss Glasgow does not portray the traditional South where everyone lives in a pillared mansion." . . . A foolish person suggested recently the construction of a Lincoln-Lee Memorial Bridge over the Potomac River. There was an immediate and unanimous opposition Down Here. The name of Lee must never be coupled with Lincoln because Lee, the epitome of every virtue, stands by himself, alone, on the topmost pinnacle of perfect nobility, although the essential greatness of both Lincoln and Lee lay in their complete dedication of self to duty, as they respectively saw it.

The so-called Confederate Catechism has been completely dis-

credited but it continues to pop up again and again. A third edition written and published by a former president of the ancient College of William and Mary appeared in November, 1929. Who still buys it? Who still approves it when it says, for instance, "Without consulting Congress, Lincoln sent great armies to the South, and it was a war of a president, elected by a minority of the people of the North." . . . "It shows the lack of principle that characterized Lincoln that he later referred to the Southern States as insurrectionary states." . . . "A low tariff would have attracted the trade of the world to the South . . . A fear of this prosperity induced Lincoln to make war on the South." . . . "Lincoln had shown no kindness to the South while he lived, and there is no reason to suppose that he would have done so had he survived the war. His war violated every law of humanity." That this document is not completely disapproved in the South is shown by the fact that the *Southern Churchman* a year or two ago under a former editor reprinted it in its entirety.

It could not be cause of just complaint that Lincoln's birthday is not a Southern holiday; nor that the nineteenth of January is legally "Lee-Jackson Day" and the third of June "Jefferson Davis Day". For the outlander, though, it is a bit surprising to read in the Virginia Code, for instance, that the thirtieth of May is *Confederate* Memorial Day, and in the daily newspapers that a pamphlet called "Lincoln, the Barbarian" appeared on the desks of the state assemblymen after they, for some reason, took a recess on Lincoln's birthday, at a recent session. The distributor of the pamphlet may have been a crank with a complex and possibly represented no one but himself but there was no public outcry against him . . .

A Southerner suggested that Jefferson Davis be included in a historical pageant which was being conducted largely with the hope of bringing tourists South. When it was pointed out—by a Northerner, of course,—that visiting Northerners might feel that historical accuracy would be assisted by the inclusion of Lincoln in the pageant, a riot was narrowly averted. There was no further mention of Davis after that. In reference to the same pageant this radio announcement was made: "Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe will all be portrayed but needless to state, Lee will have the place of honor." Needless to say because Lee

remains the incomparable, glorious and godlike one venerated by every Southerner in a way hard for the average disillusioned Northerner to understand. Truly my pro-Americanism has been built up on some rather slight provocations. I find myself laughing at myself but still not quite able to enjoy repetitious reference to "Washington, the Virginian" and "Lee, the American". These two little phrases suggest many a kink in Southern psychology, however. . . . Able, educated Virginians today sincerely believe that Lee is Virginia's first and greatest citizen, and that there is nothing comparable to the honor and distinction of being a Virginian . . . Of this I do not complain. My new-born patriotic zeal leads me to feel that there are valuable compensations in all such emotional tie-ups. But should the precinct govern the city, and the city own the state? The following example gives at least one Southerner's answer. A large meeting was called for Armistice Day. Some one suddenly noticed the complete absence of flags in the decorations. A *young* woman was asked to go and get a flag, quickly. She returned saying, "I could not find a *Virginia* flag, any place." She looked blank when it was suggested that an *American* flag was wanted.

I have always been in sympathy with states' rights and home rule. But I find now I am not always as ardent about them as formerly. The states' right attitude of the South on Jamestown and Yorktown is so disconcerting at close hand. Why should these and other historic shrines be neglected, because local communities are too poor to preserve them appropriately? Why, indeed, should they be considered the personal property of any state? For instance, when Jamestown was a reality, West Virginia and Ohio were a part of Virginia's territory. Are they and the rest of the country to have no national rights in the birthplace of the nation? Editorially and otherwise many Southerners answer, "the historical shrines of the South" should remain under state control. When the 71st Congress considered taking Jamestown Island by gift, purchase, or condemnation, many Southern ladies could not rest at night until the bill was amended saving the Jamestown plot from the blot of Federal control. In reference to the same Colonial National Monument which brought cheer to everyone wishing to see the past preserved for posterity, a Southern spinster wrote: "We are torn by the desire to see the date

1607 nailed to the Federal mast; and an ardent hope that the Federal government will keep its hands off everything in Virginia . . . Much as we have longed to have the date of the first settlement stamped upon American minds we would have liked to see Virginia take care of her own in her own way and not turn over the roots and branches of her history to the shears and pruning hook of the Federal government." The lady who wrote these lines about "*her history*" enjoys a considerable popularity in her home town. This is interesting also because it contains another Southern obsession: Northerners have maliciously tried to steal from Jamestown the distinction of being the first *permanent* English settlement in the New World. How they do chatter about those words "permanent" and "first" when every school child knows it was Jamestown, 1607, thirteen years before Plymouth. Literate Northerners note too, that the very English Annapolis Royal, Novia Scotia, also swells with pride over her settlement date, 1604, three years before Jamestown and readily admits she was saved from the French by Captain Argyle from Virginia, in 1613.

Both Annapolis Royal and Plymouth look very much more "permanent" to the casual tourist than does the lonely church tower standing at Jamestown, sole relict today of her original permanency. But after all what of it? But Southern editorials fairly crackle at times. Once, the dull Coolidge, attempting to compliment the South on its improved schools and roads, not adding, as he could have, that a very great deal remains to be done, caused an eloquent editor to write, "The South was never a province of Massachusetts. Its people were making history on this continent before the first pilgrim packed his baggage for the journey to New England. The South was never an asylum for morons. Its people have written the chapters by which this country is governed and established, those principles of freedom and justice under which society is regulated." Who would gainsay that? But is not a so-glorious past best honored by vigorous present accomplishments? . . . Some achievements, both North and South, in freedom and justice for poor whites and Negroes, today, now, are urgently called for.

Crossing the Potomac into the North now gives me a patriotic thrill similar to the joy of the round-the-world-traveller finally

steaming by Liberty Ever-so-Faintly Lighting the World, in New York Harbor. Here is another small incident which, I presume, has gone into my present flair for things North-American. At a tea in a beautiful old Southern garden everything was charming one June day. Suddenly some one remarked that one of the guests had just finished a club article on the South and that it would be delightful to have her read it. After a little persuasion the lady coyly produced her composition and read it to the tea party. In an earnest, ladylike voice, and at interminable length, this Southern gentlewoman proceeded to extol, in extravagant terms, the ancient glories of her home state, the happy life of the Negroes "befo de wah" and to denounce the venomous cruelty and destruction of the wild beasts from the North.—Contrari-minded at the mention of the former happy state of the Negroes my thoughts leaped to a headline I had seen not so long before in a Southern newspaper "Three Men and a Negro Killed."—When the lady finished reading at last, there was a gush of congratulations and many suggestions as to possible publishers for the article. The lone D. Y. present fervently hoped that silence would lend her consent to everything but not so. One lady turned and asked me directly, what had I thought of the article. I answered truthfully and I trust tactfully, "It was most interesting."—And so it was.

What in the world should a D. Y. say when a Southern lady innocently says to her: "Isn't it terrible the way all the old houses are falling into the hands of Northerners?" To most Northerners it would honestly seem a fine thing that these lovely old places are in many cases being saved from utter destruction by Northern industry and money. However it is much wiser not to breathe such heresy. It is better to let a Southern lady write:

Nothing is more exasperating to Southerners than to have some alien from North or West come down South of Mason and Dixon's Line, buy up some fine old mansion dating from Colonial days and proceed to "add improvements." "Just like them," we say. There are no traditions where they come from, so of course they don't recognize any here. However, Northerners and Westerners are not the only ones to blame for such iconoclasm.

And then she proceeds to describe a charming old home restored

to crude mediocracy "by Virginians who had their own ideas about 'improvements.'"

Some of that is true. The practice of reverently handing on from generation to generation established custom or tradition is less well established in the North than in the South. Indeed, as I analyze the situation, it is right here that we seem to reach the essential difference in the creeds of the two sections. The South gives tradition almost the force of enacted law, the North cares little for the transmitted precedent unless it is presently true and useful. Some ancient opinions and theories remain beautiful and practical in this modern world. Such traditions the Northerner naturally and prudely accepts, notwithstanding any Southerner to the contrary. Traditions which are empty of present meaning and fulfillment are easily put aside by the Northerner, which perhaps helps to explain the more rapid progress of the North in many departments of life. On the whole, the Northerner faces the present with something approaching a scientific attitude; he wants the truth though it may not be agreeable. The Southerner holds tight the belief that all Southerners are "cultured"; that Southern men are "Christian gentlemen"; that the women are "beautiful ladies", and that nearly every Virginian belongs to the "F. F. V." composed exclusively of "Cavaliers". In other words, the Southerner says, I believe in the Hatchet and the Cherry Tree, whether it is true or not I believe because I have always believed; it is my tradition to believe.—The Northerner says, if it is not true, away with it, traditions founded on falsehoods are not sacred, and anyway, I like the real man much better than the prig in the story.

Need it be added that though these generalizations are true, they are only approximately true, of course? Many Southerners refuse to enjoy present decadence because their past was glorious, they even admit that this past suffered from some imperfections; they see that a tradition can only inadequately hide present inferiority.—And many Northerners are tremendously afraid of realities and enjoy complexes composed equally of Nordic supremacy and Mayflower ancestry . . . But even a land "where there are no traditions" would know better than to desecrate a fine, old, state-supported educational institution . . . Traditions may hang thick around the ancient College of William and Mary but there stands its flag pole bearing this inscription: "Presented

to William and Mary College by Klans of Province No. 2, Realm of Virginia, Knights of Ku Klux Klan, September 26, 1926."

Possession of money confers much less distinction in the South than in the North and all praise for that, but the mere lack of money, on the other hand, often seems to be peculiarly honorable. Personal worth is not based on money, but neither is it based on brains and personality, but on Southern lineage and family. The whispered phrase, "My dear, the best blood of all Virginia flows in her veins" makes a Southern lady of a clerk who will never be better than a very poor clerk indeed. And many a poor woman with neither family nor money tries very hard to claim a distant kinship to the Lees, or other old family so as to feel her inferiority less.—Oh yes, the Northerner in the South may find many pitiful, tragic, laughable, interesting things there. It is a grand human experience, exceedingly pleasant in spite of difficulties and differences.

*by Maristan Chapman*

## STET

And are we then so very sad  
Who go untenanted,  
Preferring wind-strewn sky for roof,  
And warm, dark earth for bed?

"All poets are a little mad,"  
They tell you. Surely, no!  
But serious-solemn, proper folk  
Will mostly find them so.

*by James Remington McCarthy*

## THE NEW DEAL IN TENNESSEE

### REGIONAL PROBLEMS VERSUS SECTIONAL ANTAGONISMS

**I**F there is anything that makes a Southerner unreasonably irritated it is to suggest to him that the United States Government has stepped in to help him toward a new economic security and happiness. If you cite the advent of the Tennessee Valley Authority he loftily informs you that that particular government project is intended to help the nation as a whole, because it is an experiment. He will add that Southerners, and Tennesseans in particular, are providing most of the talent, labor, and time for the furtherance of the project. Yet, in the same breath, he will curse the government's regarding him and his fellow citizens as guinea pigs and will decry the fact—it is a fact—that Southern talent is being largely ignored, while talent from other parts of the country is given preference. In other words, there is either confused thinking or a misunderstanding, if not defiance, of new economic trends on the part of many Southerners today concerning the so-called New Deal.

It was not so many months ago, for instance, when a group of Southern manufacturers loudly applauded a speech by one John E. Edgerton who admitted he was apprehensive of an invasion of alien workers from the North. What he was thinking of, of course, was the wage differential, not the Tennessee Valley Authority. He—and every other industrialist present at the meeting—had in mind the thought that if the differential were wiped out, so that Southern wages would be on a par with Northern wages, it would prove disastrous. What these gentlemen feared was that they would be required to pay higher wages. But they coated their expression of such fears with the statement that the Anglo-Saxon content of the South must not be polluted by Northern and foreign

strains. This is an amazing attitude for a part of the nation which just now is the beneficiary of the greatest economic experiment ever conducted by the Federal Government. It reveals a sectionalism that is out of tune with the supposed new era and contradicts the South's supposed hopes for a new prosperity. It gives color to the rumor that the South does not want either progress or prosperity because it would bring too much money to those who shouldn't have it. It gives added color to the generally accepted belief that Southerners haven't forgotten the Civil War and are antagonistic toward Northerners.

My own experience has led me to accept the rumors and the generally accepted beliefs. As a Northerner—and God knows I never thought of myself as one until I entered the South—I was interested only in finding out what the significance of the Tennessee Valley Authority, in relation to the country as a whole, really was. I felt that to be my duty as a journalist and my right as an American. I was well aware that the funds to promote the authority's activities had come out of the national pocketbook—not the Southern pocketbook or the Tennessee Valley pocketbook. But to my amazement, I discovered an antagonistic attitude toward me and my curiosities that seemed out of all reason. Let me hasten to say, parenthetically, that there were several gentlemen of eminent intellectual attainments (as Senator "Ham" Lewis might say on the floor of the United States Senate) who went out of their way to help me. They had no sectional inhibitions and consequently made my task easier than it might have been. But among the rank and file of citizens and officials there was only distrust, suspicion and outward hostility. They seemed to feel that I was an "outsider" who was putting his nose into business that was not his concern. Indeed, after writing a few articles for a Chattanooga newspaper, I was surprised to learn that many readers resented a "Northerner" telling them about themselves. In other words, I was convinced that no matter what you may hear, no matter what fine speeches may be made at Gettysburg or on Lookout Mountain on Memorial Day, the South still dreams angrily of the Civil War. When you speak to anyone below the Mason and Dixon line about "the war" they do not think of the World War but of the Civil War. This is all quite deplorable but equally significant when anyone at-

tempts to write of the Tennessee Valley Authority and its great experiment.

Southern industrialists express the fear that the invasion of Northern labor, as a result of elimination of the wage differential, would force the people of the South to accustom themselves to new and alien standards, customs, and philosophies. They seem to think that the South must be preserved for Southerners only, something which defies the whole spirit of pioneering. Of course, in many respects, the industrialists and the average citizens cannot be entirely blamed for this attitude. The Tennessee Valley Authority's early activities were anything but happily diplomatic. Average Southerners have watched the experts come down from Washington and establish what to them amounted to a super-regional government with headquarters at Knoxville, Tennessee. They have listened as these experts told them, in the manner of first-class seers, about the great day awaiting them—a day of the distant future. They have heard of reservoirs that will wipe out their homes, of dams that will provide them with cheap power, of "relocation" plans that will transfer them to other areas, of decentralization projects that will set up industries in rural communities, of land planning, of home planning, of afforestation, soil erosion and navigation, flood control and fertilizer distribution. They have listened and watched—and many of them are bewildered. But their feelings do not always end with bewilderment. They are also tinged with more than a trace of resentment. It has come to their ears that they are, so to speak, on a national dissecting table. They are to be a part of the great American Experiment. The more intelligent of the Tennessee Valley have accepted this with a cynical good-humor but the more impatient cry: "We are not guinea pigs!" Again, the people of the Valley, particularly of Tennessee itself, feel restless at the importation of Northern blood into the comfortably furnished offices of the Tennessee Valley Authority in Knoxville. Both the intelligent and the uninformed are asking: Is a form of dominion government being forced upon us from Washington?

## II.

All these things, of course, may appeal to the reader and to the people at Washington, particularly, as unwarranted and unfair.

What is fair, however, is that the Tennessee Valley Authority was not established as an emergency measure to "aid" a state or a section. It is a long-range proposition whose real accomplishments and impacts may not be judged or felt for another twenty-five or even fifty years. The physical achievements—in the form of dams and reservoirs and even the introduction of new industries—may be visible within a few years. But the social effects of the Tennessee Experiment surely cannot be appraised until another generation has arrived. That generation, so it is believed, will fit itself into the new pattern because it will be free of the old conservatisms and doubts.

But while all that is true it is a living generation that must be dealt with today. Perhaps there might have been no trouble, no doubts today, had not the Utopians entered upon the scene. There were two classes of Utopians. One consisted of writers, amateur sociologists, professors, newspaper columnists from New York who, after a hurried trip to Knoxville, with perhaps a few side trips to Muscle Shoals and the Norris Dam site, went home and solemnly analyzed the Valley experiment for the benefit of the outside world. That did not bother the people of the valley so much. It was the other group—the government officials, engineers and economists—who came down to "run the works" and to tell the Tennessee Valley people all about themselves and their colorful, promising future. This second group began to upset the confidence of many people. They came in the manner of missionaries bent upon saving the benighted heathen. They assumed the attitude that they were qualified to tell the Tennessee people about themselves because, after all, had they not "majored" in all matters concerning economics, sociology, industrial relations and heaven-knows-what-else? What they overlooked was the calibre, mental and moral, of the people of the valley and mountain populations. They are a people who cannot be easily "reformed" or "modernized". They are of a stock, largely, that goes back to the old immigrations of stout English, Scottish, and Irish settlers who went to Tennessee and made their homes there and asked for nothing else but to be left alone and to achieve their own happiness.

The human composition of what we conveniently call "The Valley" is diverse indeed. You can go into some parts of the Ten-

nessee mountains where they still talk Elizabethan English. You even may hear them sing ballads that deal with the unfortunate fate of Barbara Allen and of the hangman at the forks of the creek. You will hear one of them say: "We-uns haint no call to be ashamed o' ourselves nor of ary thing we do. We ax no favors. We stay 'way up hyar and mind our own business". On the other hand, there are flourishing towns, busy industrial centers where modern methods are as well known and as thoroughly applied as in any other part of the nation. There are flourishing farms, too. It may be utterly true that most of the people have little money—there are thousands of families, particularly in the mountain and rural communities, whose total income is less than fifty dollars a year—or that they live, many of them, in shacks, without even a real bathtub. But it is not by choice that they live in such miserly discomfort: the reason is that they cannot enjoy modern civilized luxuries and necessities without income. That factor the "experts" largely overlooked as they swarmed into the valley and over the mountains. They came singing a gospel of reform. They spoke glowingly of introducing basket-weaving and other manual arts into little homes. They told the mountaineer and the valley man that they must change from the old ways of living to the new and enlightened ways. The government's missionaries did not even stop there. They talked of promoting a folk lore and folk songs and folk dances. There was talk, in fact, that the Tennessee Valley might well have, in view of its forthcoming self-containment, a special currency! The people of the valley were told, also, that they would be taught the uses of electric refrigerators, modern cooking stoves, heaters, vacuum cleaners, and such. In other words, the valley people regarded themselves as being treated as though they were the untutored inhabitants of some island colony. It was only natural that many people in the Tennessee Basin should have become apprehensive, if not resentful. They resented the suggestion that they were incapable of handling their own destinies. They resented the implication that Washington was the seat of a government which regarded the valley as a colony.

## III.

But there is another side to the picture. The Government lately has been pouring millions of dollars into the Tennessee Valley. The people of the valley—and all Southerners, it seems—appear to forget that the Tennessee Valley Authority was not created by Tennessee funds alone nor its cause furthered by Southern industrialists alone. The funds came out of the national treasury, as I have said before, and a mid-Western United States Senator was the leading advocate in Congress of the valley development and many of the leading experts of the TVA, coming from other sections, identified themselves with the organization at a financial loss to themselves. The TVA, in other words, is a regional project, not a sectional one. It is based on the thought of eventually bringing the full and contented life to the people of that territory in the South, regardless of the extravagant, irritating, and misleading statements of some of its administrators. Therefore, if the people of the Tennessee Valley want to adopt the attitude of the Southern industrialists and say "wages must be kept low to keep out the outsiders" they are revealing themselves as curiously inconsistent. They are willing to reach out one hand and take what the government gives them—they are as equally determined to put up the other hand toward the North and say: "They shall not pass"—the people, not the dollars.

There is no large area in this country that ever was brought to a realization of prosperity by assuming an insular attitude. Sometime ago Secretary of Agriculture Wallace mentioned that an Arkansan said a wall could be built about his State and it could remain self-contained. It might be suggested to the Arkansan that ten years after that wall had been built the weeds within would be higher than the wall itself. It is the way with economy. As another instance, Texas declared for "free territory" for independent action not long ago. Very high sounding. Texas for the Texans. But Texas did not hesitate to accept more than one hundred million dollars in Federal relief and other funds. Those funds did *not* come out of the pockets of Texans alone but out of the pockets of the people in every State in the Union.

What all this comes down to, of course, is that the new regionalism is having a struggle with sectionalism. Regionalism means

the national welfare first. Sectionalism means selfish self-containment. The Tennessee Valley experiment is regionalistic and is intended as a part of the national pattern. But the utterances of some industrialists—and others not so important—suggest a mood of sectionalism which would frown upon anything that doesn't benefit the South. It is all right, of course, for the industrialists to insist upon a wage differential in the South. But they should be careful not to be hypocritical about it. They should base it on other grounds than the horrible threat of a "Northern or Federal invasion".

The truth is, there already is an invasion. It is a Federal invasion of the South in the benevolent form of the Tennessee Valley Authority. There will, in time, be similar invasions in other regions of the United States. And any region that talks high-handedly about keeping out "aliens" from the North, East, or West might very well be consistent. They ought also, under the circumstances, to refuse to accept the relief and promotional funds that come out of the pockets of *all* the people of the nation.

*by L. Robert Lind*

### TIGER WINGS

The tiger lilies all one way  
Bend to the grass and slowly fall,  
Where solemn robins pick and stray,  
Under the wall.

Green grass and wet, with sun to stir the drops,  
Grows wide about, but only these bright wings  
Of some strange bird of Paradise  
Now stop

The heart with swaying colour.  
Under the wall,  
The tiger lilies all one way  
Bend to the grass and slowly fall.

*by Virginianus Dabney*

## REDS IN DIXIE

THE agreement reached between President Roosevelt and Comrade Litvinoff incident to the recognition of Russia by the United States does not by any means preclude the possibility of further Communist propaganda in this country. While the Russian government has promised not to engage in such agitation directly or indirectly, the Communist-led Workers Party in America, which has no connection with that government, will continue its operations. It may be counted on to capitalize to the utmost the unemployment and suffering which are concomitants of the depression, and to seek to arouse the discontented elements against those in authority.

This being true, what should be the policy of our Federal, State, and local officials toward these trouble-makers?

There are, in general, two methods of approach to the problem. On the one hand is the approach of the professionally patriotic "hundred per cent. American", who almost invariably favors rough treatment for the Reds. He has learned through some mysterious legerdemain unknown to his fellow-countrymen, that the constitutional guarantees of petition, assembly and free speech were never intended to apply to radicals—only to Democrats and Republicans, who don't need them. Hence when he hears a Communist haranguing a group of unemployed concerning the iniquities of the capitalist "bosses", he yells for a cop. All too often the cop arrives on the double quick and hauls the Red orator off to jail.

In contrast to this technique of Ham Fishery is the system long in vogue in Great Britain. It is well known that in Hyde Park, London, for example, a special area near the Marble Arch is set aside for the use of those who desire to address the populace on

any subject ranging from "Better Milk for Babies" to "Home Rule for India". The Communists have a special soap box of their own in the park, and they make full use of it. It serves as a safety valve through which they blow off steam which otherwise might cause a serious explosion.

A similar system has been employed with salutary effect in certain American localities. In Union Square, New York City, at the present time Reds are allowed to deliver their harangues under police protection, in direct contrast to the situation which formerly prevailed there, when bluecoats regularly broke up Communist demonstrations, to the accompaniment of lusty skull-cracking. The great virtue of this system, in addition to the obvious one that it is in strict conformity with the Constitution of the United States, is to be found in the fact that it disarms the agitators so effectively. Communists are constantly endeavoring to strike the martyr pose, for it is only by raising a great clamor over their real or imaginary grievances that they can attract any appreciable attention from the public. But if they are protected in the exercise of their constitutional prerogatives, they are immediately deprived of their most dangerous weapon, the cry of persecution.

The wisdom, not to say the justice, of granting radicals their rights, has been vindicated on so many occasions that it seems almost superfluous for any one to waste good paper and ink in setting forth the merits of such a policy. There are, nevertheless, millions of Americans who are thoroughly convinced that all Russophiles should be clapped into jail, constitution or no constitution. The American Legion apparently adheres to this general view, for at its annual convention in 1933 it adopted resolutions calling for the deportation of alien Communists, the refusal to Communists of permission to enter this country, and the enactment of legislation providing for the "adequate punishment of all persons who advocate the overthrow of the government". Those who are familiar with the past record of the Legion with respect to such matters may rest assured that "adequate" punishment for radical agitators is, in the opinion of this organization, severe punishment.

At about the time that the Legionnaires were adopting their resolutions in Chicago, an episode occurred in Atlanta which illustrates still further the attitude of those who believe in handling

all bolsheviks with gloves off. A woman sought to advocate Communist doctrines in a speech in the Georgia capital. She was promptly jailed. Not only so, but the Atlanta *Constitution* declared that there would be "general approval" of this action and pointed with pride to the fact that "a few months ago a long-term sentence was given to a member of a band of Communists who defiantly endeavored to hold meetings in Atlanta, after having been warned not to do so".

No one understands better than President Roosevelt the fatuousness of the policy pursued in this regard by the American Legion and the authorities of Atlanta. In addition to the fact that he recognized Russia over the openly-expressed opposition of the Legion and similar groups, he revealed an intelligent attitude toward the problem of radical agitation as Governor of New York. In November, 1932, for example, a delegation of "hunger marchers", bristling with "demands", called on him at Albany. He received them courteously in his office and listened to their grievances, thereby disarming them completely.

Confronted early in his presidential administration by the second Bonus Expeditionary Force, he handled it in masterly fashion. Recognizing that it was not only the humane and the fair thing but also the expedient thing to treat the B. E. F. with consideration and understanding, Mr. Roosevelt "killed it with kindness". His predecessor, with bungling ineptitude, had followed the opposite course and had stirred up a hornet's nest of monumental proportions.

Governor Floyd B. Olson of Minnesota is another public official who has demonstrated that the way to squelch an agitator is not to put a lid on him but to give him plenty of rope. When Communists began marching almost daily to the Minnesota capitol at St. Paul, Governor Olson determined to afford them every opportunity to air their grievances. So instead of putting them in durance vile, he summoned carpenters and erected a stand on the capitol grounds. He equipped the stand with a loud-speaker and invited the Reds to use it twenty-four hours a day without charge. Instead of yanking them to the ground and thwacking them over the head, the police protected them from interference. Consequently the citizens of St. Paul were the recipients of a flood of Communist oratory. But the orators soon grew tired.

Few listened to their ululations, and they finally gave up in disgust, after threatening Mr. Olson with divers varieties of castigation. To these threats the chief executive of Minnesota replied with a few hearty guffaws.

Similar treatment of the bolsheviks obtained similar results at the University of North Carolina. For some reason that institution was chosen as a focal point for agitation during the session of 1931-32, and half a dozen Reds enrolled in the student body. Others came down from the North for the Communist meetings which were held on the campus. The university authorities were faced with the question whether to permit these activities. It did not require much time, however, for President Frank P. Graham to make up his mind. One of the South's foremost liberals, Dr. Graham granted the radicals every constitutional right. He even leaned over backward, and gave them protection from interference which he might not have given to any other group. The consequences were as might have been expected. The agitators found it difficult to agitate under such conditions, for the requisite persecution was denied them. None returned to the university the following session.

The examples cited above of the excellent results obtained in various States by the pursuance of a policy of permitting Communists to talk themselves to death, are in severe contrast to the terrific uproar which ensued in Richmond, Virginia, upon the adoption of the opposite technique by the municipal authorities.

The Great Red Menace descended upon Richmond in the fall of 1932 in the shape of a diminutive Communist from the North yclept Abe Tomkin. Comrade Tomkin nosed around town for a while, and then organized the Richmond Unemployed Council, a small group composed mainly of Negroes. Ere long he was joined by Comrade Thomas H. Stone, a Richmonder who began life as a Roman Catholic, subsequently became a Methodist evangelist, and then burgeoned into a Socialist and finally into a Communist.

The Richmond Unemployed Council had never been heard of by 98 per cent. of the people of the city and it probably would have remained in obscurity if Mayor J. Fulmer Bright, ordinarily one of the most reasonable and courteous public officials in Virginia, had not become sincerely convinced that the way to thwart the Reds was to hound and persecute them to the limit. The

national "hunger march" was impending at the time, and some of the marchers were to pass through Richmond en route to Washington. The Unemployed Council asked for a permit to hold a demonstration in honor of the occasion in the city auditorium. Mayor Bright not only refused the permit, but when Tomkin headed a delegation which called on him to protest the refusal, he had Tomkin arrested on a charge of vagrancy. This was the beginning of a long period of turmoil, during which the police arrested the Reds on every possible pretext, usually in violation of the most elementary constitutional rights.

An important consequence was that the agitators obtained much more publicity than they would otherwise have gotten, for the local newspapers were quick to sense the far-reaching significance of this campaign. They chronicled it in their news columns in considerable detail and filled their editorial pages with jeremiads.

Coupled with the fact that the Communists received an immense amount of attention from the press, as a result of the tactics of the mayor and the police, was the further fact that much sympathy was aroused in their behalf in quarters which ordinarily would have felt no concern for them. This is not to be wondered at when one considers the discriminatory methods employed by the authorities. For instance, shortly after Comrade Tomkin was bailed by a Mrs. Hodor, the police picked up her husband for operating his grocery store on Sunday. Numerous other grocery stores in the same neighborhood were operating similarly, but they were not molested until several days later, after Hodor's lawyer had threatened retaliatory legal proceedings against the municipal authorities. At about the same time Comrade Stone was literally thrown out of the City Social Service Bureau by detectives when he went there in search of relief for certain unemployed. He crossed the street to the mayor's office for the purpose of remonstrating, and the mayor had him locked up on a charge of disorderly conduct, although no one claimed he had been disorderly, in the usual meaning of that term, or even discourteous. Some weeks later the Unemployed Council held a meeting in one of the city parks. The gathering overflowed across a path. The police arrested a number of the leaders for "obstructing traffic," the traffic being pedestrian traffic around the park fountain. Stone went to the police station to inquire concerning bail

for some of those taken into custody, and was not only denied the information, but when he refused to leave the station house without it, he too was jailed.

The concrete results of this campaign of persecution were reflected in the attendance at the Unemployed Council's meetings. Whereas these meetings were small at the outset, they grew with considerable rapidity, until the number of persons present reached six hundred. The fact did not deter the police, however. They continued their ruthless tactics.

Not only so, but strangely enough they permitted the growth of the Unemployed Council to undermine their morale. They became positively hysterical, and their fevered imaginations conjured up all sorts of impending calamities. For no reason at all a truckload of police, swinging nightsticks and apparently apprehensive of an imminent Soviet invasion, would dash up to a street corner in downtown Richmond. To the astonishment of gaping citizens, the minions of the law would leap from their conveyance and begin rushing about in search of the Reds. Finding none, they would climb sheepishly into their truck and clatter back to the police station. This happened not once but several times.

But the grand climax came when the thoroughly jittery authorities revealed a diabolical plot, said to have been hatched in the brains of Comrades Tomkin and Stone, to subdue the city by force of arms. It involved the cutting of wires to plunge the town into complete darkness and the seizure of several hundred rifles used by a couple of local high school cadet corps. This fantastic and wholly mythical scheme caused genuine alarm in municipal circles. Every preparation was made for the impending emergency, and the firing pins were carefully removed from the hundreds of cadet rifles. Thus were the nefarious plans of the Marxians thwarted.

Throughout this period leaders and members of the Unemployed Council were being hauled off to jail at an astonishing rate. Usually they received either fines or sentences in Police Court, but they always appealed to Hustings Court. It took a good while for all the appealed cases to be decided by that tribunal, but this was finally accomplished. Judge John L. Ingram of Hustings Court, an able and courageous man, threw all of the

cases out of court except one, and in that instance he remitted the \$20 fine imposed on the defendant by a jury.

Among the cases thrown out by Judge Ingram were about a score involving charges of disorderly conduct. This led the mayor to conclude that the existing disorderly conduct ordinance lacked the necessary teeth. He accordingly announced that he had introduced a paper of his own containing the requisite number of molars. This proposed ordinance, one of the most amazing documents of the kind ever seen or heard of, provided a fine of from \$5 to \$100 for disorderly conduct, and defined it as "acts which disturb or tend to disturb the public peace or order or decorum or comfort or convenience of the community". It even went on to say that anybody who "shall use words or commit acts which endanger the morals, safety or health of the community or any part thereof" would likewise be deemed guilty of this offense. As soon as the text of this extraordinary paper was made known, a Richmond editor declared with reason that it ought to be termed "an ordinance to permit the police to arrest whomsoever they please". There was other strong criticism from various quarters, and His Honor apparently decided that there was no use trying to get such a paper as that through the City Council. At any rate nothing further has been heard of it.

At about the time that the last of the charges against Unemployed Council members were dismissed in Hustings Court, the council became more or less inactive. Its leaders seemingly became convinced that Richmond is fundamentally too conservative a city for Communism or radicalism to make satisfactory headway there. Coupled with this conservatism was the comparative mildness of the depression in the Virginia capital. This meant that there were fewer desperately needy persons who might be inclined to join a movement with Communistic implications.

But although the Unemployed Council was quiescent during the summer and Richmonders were becoming hopeful that Comrades Stone and Tomkin had departed for fresh fields and pastures new, the council returned to the assault in the fall. A strike of stevedores on the city wharf was fomented by the organization in October, and Stone, as usual, was carried off in a patrol wagon. Then in late December he led a "hunger march" around the City Hall,

and was clubbed on the head and arrested when he sought to make a speech.

Thus, thanks to the shortsightedness of the local authorities, Richmond passed through six or eight months of turmoil. In addition, serious antagonisms were aroused, and the city was advertised as a place where constitutional rights are frequently ignored by officials and police. Some of the wounds caused by the episodes in question still rankle. The mayor "severed diplomatic relations" with the press shortly after the rumpus got under way because of the manner in which the papers espoused the cause of freedom of speech, petition, and assembly, and criticised him for his policies.

A cartoon showing him and the chief of police with their heads under the bedclothes while an army of imaginary Reds converged on City Hall, failed to soothe the jangled nerves of those two harassed officials. For many months the mayor refused to grant interviews to newspapermen. The police department gave no news whatever to the papers, except such as could be gleaned from "blotters" and warrants, and even this information was refused until a court injunction was obtained forcing the department to give reporters access to these public records.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that other communities will take cognizance of Richmond's unhappy experience and formulate their own policies accordingly. In doing so, they should bear in mind that bad as the situation in Richmond was, it would doubtless have been worse if distress in the city had been more acute, and if the population as a whole had been less conservative and hence more amenable to counsels of violence.

How much better it would have been if the mayor of Virginia's capital and his aides had followed the example set for them by the officials of Baltimore! When the Red Menace descended upon that city in the spring of 1930, it was laughed to death. The bolsheviks launched their offensive by seeking a permit to parade. The permit was not only granted, but band music and a motorcycle escort were furnished the marchers; the acting mayor, smiling broadly, placed a red rose in his buttonhole in honor of the occasion, his secretary sported a crimson necktie, and the president of the fire board turned out with a red carnation. The Communists held their parade but the whole town gave them the horse-laugh when they reached the end of the route. And that was the last of the Red Menace in Baltimore.

*by Richard Thoma.*

## THE SAD GOTHIC WOMEN

The orchestras of cathedral glass  
spilling their bright prismatic music  
point the figures in oriflammes.

Then from their high exalted state  
they slip along the stone in rose  
in blue and green and festucine

from attitude and altitude  
of marigold and catherine-wheel  
to cuneiform beatitude.

Each in her lozenge or her moon  
strikes her harp or her dulcimer  
attacking the silence of rhomb and sphere.

Curving from the sky like moths  
reaching through the gloom like prayers  
weeping with the sunlight in their hair—

they mingle the myrrh of sanctity  
with the crystal whirr of Paradise  
in the gala mathematics of the Rose.

by Leonard Brown

## POETRY AS MIMESIS

*"Every age has a kind of universal genius."*

—DRYDEN, *Of Dramatic Poesy*.

PHILOSOPHY concerns itself with ideas, but with ideas poetry has no immediate connection. Yet in English writing we commit the mistake of speaking often of a poet's "philosophy"—of Wordsworth's, of Goethe's for instance—meaning thereby the poet's "beliefs". But the question is whether poetry is primarily the statement of belief, the representation of ideas. Is poetry philosophical?

Since ideas are either true or false, a philosophy can maintain itself only as long as its ideas remain incontrovertible. When they are true the philosophy will persevere; when they are false the philosophy will succumb, usually to mutation. Yet no one dreams of testing poetry as either true or false. What is "true" or "false" in Shakespeare? Although he is older than Kant, Shakespeare still satisfies us, whereas Kant does not; and whereas the poet is as pure as when he wrote in the seventeenth century, the philosopher comes down to us as mutated by succeeding philosophers. Poetry, then, has a constancy which is impossible to philosophy.

And so we come to understand that poetry is not philosophy, is not even philosophical, and that by asking the philosophical from poetry we destroy it. For we expose it to attack from oppugnant philosophical opinion; and poetry-as-philosophy can then maintain itself only as long as its ideas are regarded as "true". But we have just remarked that Shakespeare has endured where Kant has not. For this reason we must insist that poetry does not pretend to ideas, but only to another kind of representation, to mimesis. That is, we must insist that writing be either philosophy or poetry. Then, if we wish to speak of the "philosophy" of Wordsworth, we

can do so with clear knowledge that we are not speaking of his poetry, and that late nineteenth-century materialistic monism cannot endanger his value to us. For Wordsworth does remain. He remains, therefore, as the poet rather than as the philosopher; he remains because he asserts nothing as either true or false (when he is the poet), because his poetry, finally, is mimetic rather than philosophically persuasive. Wordsworth the philosopher is dead, but Wordsworth the poet is still living.

So that if philosophy is a theory of life, poetry is the very essence of life; and if history is the description of event, poetry is the event itself. Because it is not concerned with ideas, we cannot, then, test poetry as either true or false; we cannot "disagree" with poetry any more successfully than we can "disagree" with the Western Hemisphere. We can *disagree* with a theory of life, or the description of an event, but we can only *prefer* life above death, one event above another, one poem above another, Dryden above Crabbe. Our preference is not based upon fact, or truth; but upon taste.

But occasionally we disagree with Wordsworth:

... One adequate support  
For the calamities of mortal life  
Exists, one only;—an assured belief  
That the procession of our fate, howe'er  
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being  
Of infinite benevolence and power;  
Whose everlasting purposes embrace  
All accidents, converting them to good.

Any person acquainted with science, philosophy, and metaphysics subsequent to Wordsworth will wish to disagree with this sentiment. Morgan's studies in anthropology alone make disagreement compulsory. At the present moment the world is filled with people whose beliefs do not constitute Wordsworth's "adequate support for the calamities of mortal life"; yet some other support they must have, since they manage to survive life's calamities, even to enjoy life. Mr. A. E. Housman, for example, speaks of "whatever brute and blackguard made the world", a conception far distant from Wordsworth's "Being of infinite benevolence"; yet Mr. Housman seems to have survived life's calamities with a rather fine spirit. That is, Wordsworth's statement is a theory of life,

an idea; consequently, it is either true or false. *The statement is an idea, and, therefore, not poetry.* Reluctantly or not, we must exclude it from the body of work which Wordsworth the poet produced, and attach it instead to the writings of Wordsworth the philosopher. Then, if the philosopher goes down, our loss is small; for the "Lines Composed Above Tintern Abbey" will remain to us.

In short, at the moment we impose ideas upon poetry, we lose poetry. For ideas are valuable to the race only when they are true, and they do not last forever. Wordsworth's statement is, accordingly, of no value to us just now because contemporary knowledge renders it demonstrably false; and pentameters will not maintain it as poetry. The business of poetry, therefore, is not the representation of ideas, but of feeling. For feeling is neither true nor false, and consequently never subject to controversion. Because it is alive it is secure, and because it is secure it is material for art. Accordingly, the proper questions to ask of poetry are: What feeling is eligible to poetry? How does it get to the poet? And, having got to him, how is it to be represented by him in verse?

## II.

Our great poetry has always rested, as Arnold says, upon a fresh intelligible body of ideas current at the time the poetry is written. And the ideas, in turn, rest upon the living thought and practice of the day. The fresher, the more vital and alive this agminated thought and practice, the more likely we are to speak of it as liberal, or revolutionary, or even radical, rather than as conservative (which is so often merely the dead but unburied past). But we must remember that living thought and practice is always necessarily composed of the vitality of the past as well as of fresh accretion from the present. That is why it is living. And in preserving what is valuable from the past, it renders an important service to the poet, a service, moreover, which the poet cannot possibly render to himself. I mean that the poet's duty is not to select, or discard, or criticise, or evaluate anything from either the past or present, for his age performs this labor for him by preferring certain vital ideas in the realm of thought and certain vital actions in the realm of practice: the poet's duty is simply to take what his

age gives him, not to quarrel with the gift. Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare did not quarrel with the ninth, thirteenth, and sixteenth centuries after living thought and practice had shaped them and made them ready for artistic treatment. Only the inferior poet is quarrelsome.

But with living thought and practice as such, no matter how alive they may be, poetry can have no immediate connection. A refinement must first occur.

If we refine a period's thought (its science, philosophy, and metaphysics) and its practice (its economics, politics, education, and religion) into ideas, we arrive at the period's world-ideas of Man and the Universe. The period will be disposed to regard Man as either a mean or heroic creature, and the Universe as either a pleasant or unpleasant place. But with either of these world-ideas alone poetry can still have nothing immediate to do (and it is probable that neither can exist alone), for neither concept by itself has the power to arouse feeling. Only when Man is placed in the Universe is feeling created. For either the Universe offers Man a benevolent home, and he is happy; or it offers him nothing which he desires, and he is plunged into despair. In either event, by placing Man in the Universe we arrive at last at a third world idea—the *kind* of home which the Universe offers Man, the "nature of things". Then from the period's perception of this "nature of things" there arises, inevitably, a world-feeling, a time mood, a *weltanschauung*, which is the period's own original creation—the quintessence of the period. This particular world-feeling is the common property of the age; it belongs not to any one man (the poet), but to all men, to the world-soul; it is the original and universal genius of the moment. This common feeling established, the period is now ready for the poet. *For this feeling, since it derives from all of both the past and the present that is living at the hour, is the only proper subject for representation in poetry.*

### III.

Here the poet enters and, being unusually sensitive, apprehends the world-feeling of the time. As I said, his business is not to reject, or criticise, or even evaluate this world-feeling; it is only to represent it—which means that he must accept it even though

it distresses both him and his period. If he accepts it, and has a critical sense of style, he may conceivably become a great poet; if he rejects it, he dooms himself to inferiority. *For there exists no major poet who ever rejected the world-feeling of his day.* The Psalms preserve perfectly the world-soul of the Hebraic culture, and Homer the world-feeling of pre-ninth-century Greece, and the medieval time-mood of our early Western culture lives forever in Dante. Invariably the superior poet has given himself to the world-feeling of his day.

But the inferior poet is no less interesting in this connection. He may be inferior in any one of several ways. For one thing, he may be quite insensitive to the world-feeling of his day. We must be thoroughly critical of such a poet, for his verse may seem to him (and to many of his readers) to be related closely to the present moment because the poet draws his "subject-matter" from the contemporary scene. But, as I hope I have implied, contemporary "subject-matter" has nothing whatever to do with vitality in poetry. Consider *Coriolanus*, or *All for Love*, or, in our own time, Mr. Robinson's very fine poem "Tristram". Here is no contemporary "subject-matter". That is, feeling is the real subject for poetry. The feeling must be contemporary, but the symbol (Coriolanus, Antony, Tristram) can be anything which conveys the feeling. Hence, Mr. Robinson, who writes of Tristram, will probably persevere, whereas the late MacKnight Black, who wrote of machines, will not: for the feeling of "Tristram" is twentieth century, alive; but the feeling of Black's poetry is early nineteenth, romantic, dead. To cite one more instance, Kipling is a fair example of the insensitive poet. He is a romantic, despite his contemporary British Square; he is an anomaly because, for one thing, he postdates poetry like "Dover Beach". By his time romanticism was dead forever so far as our Western culture is concerned; the world, as Spengler says, had entered upon its sceptical phase. Hardy rather than Kipling, consequently, is the superior poet of the period.

But an insensitive poet like Kipling is not the only inferior poet. Perhaps the inferior poet is sensitive enough to apprehend emotionally the world-feeling of his day. But perhaps he lives in a "pessimistic" time, when the time-mood is one of despair rather than of

joy. He is distressed. And being distressed, and lacking the true fortitude of the great artist, and failing to perceive that the single duty of the poet in all cultures and all centuries has always been to accept the *weltanschauung* of the moment, he rejects the world-feeling of his period and turns to the past. He seeks out another, and more comforting, *weltanschauung*, and determines to represent it in his poetry. Austin Dobson is a very fair example of this defection:

"The time is out of joint". Who will  
May strive to make it better;  
For me, this warm old window-sill,  
And this old dusty letter.

And we have Dobson's pale, fragile eighteenth-century recreations as a consequence. The dangers involved, and they are inescapable, in representing, as Dobson does, an outworn *weltanschauung*, I have already mentioned. Too much of the dead past is represented as if it were alive, and this gives to the poetry an air of unavoidable falseness and even deception. We speak of such verse as "imitative". Invariably, it seems slight, "precious", lacks vitality; it interests us chiefly as a metrical exercise or a clever reproduction of style (since it cannot reproduce feeling, feeling being always alive). Above all, defectionist verse will never be a fresh well of human emotion, and so can have no possible contact with its time. That is why Rossetti's poetry, charming and delicate as it is, is so completely ineffectual beside Hardy's or Meredith's.

But the inferior poet who, as I said, is distressed by his contemporary *weltanschauung*, and accordingly rejects it, may refuse the past as well as the present. Unlike Kipling he is not insensitive, and unlike Dobson he refuses to be imitative. Consequently, he has only himself upon which to rest his verse. And since feeling is the subject for poetry, he has to create it by himself. This is dangerous business for a poet because he has to perform all the labor which his age has already performed for him. I have explained that feeling comes from the concept of Man-in-the- Universe, which in turn comes from living thought and practice; so that the poet who wishes to create a particular feeling as a subject for his poetry is led into a complete re-creation of thought, practice, and ideas.

## POETRY AS MIMESIS

If you trap the moment before it's ripe,  
The tears of repentance you'll certainly wipe . . .

He who shall teach the child to doubt  
The rotting grave shall ne'er get out . . .

General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite,  
and flatterer . . .

This is the worst of Blake, and his best poetry is sufficient criticism of it. He is bogged down in ideas. He is ignoring the world-feeling of his day and attempting to re-create ideas for himself. The lines are scarcely pleasing as poetry. Again, Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare never did anything like this, but only represented the feeling their age had given them for representation. The worst of Blake, Whitman, Tennyson (the inferior portions of their verse) can be accounted for when we understand they were representing personal feeling or ideas. In short, this kind of inferior poet sets up a personal mood against the time-mood of the race, and the effect of his poetry is the poorer for it. Invariably he writes an inferior poetry.

## IV.

If we now understand what feeling is eligible to poetry, and how it gets to the poet, our final task is to discover how it can be represented by him in verse. Somehow he must so represent the world-feeling of his period as to make possible its re-creation in the mind of the reader.

If we remember that the poet apprehended the world-feeling of his age only by seeing Man-in-the-Universe in the particular way in which his age saw this spectacle, a possibility of representation, of mimesis, becomes clear. The poet must resort to symbols. Somehow he must breathe life into the abstract world-ideas of Man and the Universe, which he can do only by actualizing them into something concrete in a sensory way. He must find one symbol for his time's world-idea of Man, and another for his time's world-idea of the Universe; then he must present his symbol for Man as living in his symbol for the Universe. Accordingly, the poet's duty is not to represent himself, or any other man, or even a number of men, but Man—the essence of all men living at the time; his second duty is not to represent Paris, or London, or New

York, but the Universe—the essence, again, of all cities and planets turning in time, light, and space; his third duty is to bring Man and the Universe into moral conjunction. Hence, the necessity for symbols.

Even symbols, however, are unimportant to poetry unless they re-create the time-mood of the moment. If, understanding this, we examine poetry, we find that the problem of representation facing the poet has varied with the varying character of the world-feeling to be represented. Joy is not despair. If the *weltanschauung* is a happy one, we may be sure that the world-idea of Man which the age presents to the poet is pleasing. Probably this Man possesses the ability to command his own life, to choose between good and evil, to feel the inspiriting influence of love, to conduct himself, in short, as a moral creature. The happy *weltanschauung* will present to the poet also the world-idea of an orderly, dependable, benevolent nature—a pleasant Universe in which the Man may make his dignified home. The contiguity of the Man and the Universe is consequently a pleasant moral contiguity, one to be praised and celebrated and enjoyed. This moral Man and this moral Universe were the world-ideas of the early nineteenth century. Shelley found symbols for them:

The One remains, the many change and pass;  
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

\* \* \* \* \*

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;  
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!  
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;  
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

One feels the symbols are well chosen, and the feeling perfectly conveyed.

But the happy *weltanschauung* is perfectly conveyed in another way also. It is often said that antagonism (or "conflict") is the peculiar property of dramatic poetry alone, but this is not true.

Antagonism—which means antithetical symbols—is the property of most poetry. Antagonism informs Sappho's love poetry, Petrarch's, the Elizabethan sonnet-cycles, an epic like *Beowulf*, a ballad like *Edward*. Everywhere one turns one symbol is set against another. But the happy world-feeling which presents to a poet the spectacle of moral Man dwelling in dignity and peace in a benevolent Universe, offers the poet no opportunity to handle antagonism, since none is there. Consequently, the poet is confined to the celebration of a pleasant moral contiguity, and the antagonism goes undemanded as in the lines of Shelley already given. Yet, since poetry has so largely demanded the antagonism, we may expect the poet who seeks to represent the happy world-feeling will demand it also. And, indeed, he does. When the happy world-feeling denies the antagonism of Man *versus* Universe to the poet, it offers him another, Man *versus* men. If the representation of moral Man dwelling in dignity and peace in a moral Universe is the first great problem of poetry during a time of happy world-feeling, the problem of Man *versus* men is the second. Poems like *Endymion*, *Ruth*, and *Alastor* are renderings of this second subject. In poems like these the poet opposes Man to men, the ideal to the real, the ethical to the unethical, the individual to society. The antagonism is positive. But we must not suppose that this peculiar antagonism is the property of solely romantic poetry. It presents itself to a poet whenever, as I said, his period conceives Man as dwelling in dignity and peace in an orderly, dependable, benevolent Universe. This antagonism of Man *versus* men is, consequently, also the eighteenth century's: it is Dryden's, and is successfully represented by him in *Absalom and Achitophel*:

Achitophel, grown weary to possess  
A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,  
Disdain'd the golden fruit to gather free,  
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.  
Now, manifest of crimes contriv'd long since,  
He stood at bold defiance with his prince;  
Held up the buckler of the people's cause  
Against the crown, and skulk'd behind the laws.

Yet, we persist in speaking of *Absalom and Achitophel* as a "political" poem. It rests in reality upon the world-feeling of the seventeenth century, upon the conception of a dependable Universe and

a moral Man. These conceptions, rather than the Crown and Shaftesbury, made the poem possible. ". . . the people's cause against the crown": the antagonism of men *versus* Man. Dryden conveys feeling, not fact.

## V.

There remains the unhappy *weltanschauung*, the time-mood, the world-feeling of despair. It arises in a period when Man hungering as always for peace and dignity and contentment, is conceived as being denied these things by a Universe which cares little or nothing for him. Man is imagined as the prey of the gods, or of physical and chemical change, or of environment and heredity; and the Universe is imagined as amoral and mutable rather than as eternally fixed. Such a time asks the poet to observe the spectacle of a helpless creature existing darkly in a blind rush of uncontrollable forces; and from witnessing this spectacle emerges in the poet a sense of the imperfect life, which leads in turn to pessimism, bafflement, and the feeling of despair. Paradoxically, this world-feeling of despair usually appears at the stage of a race culture when the shackles of past thought and practice are suddenly thrown off—at the stage of liberation. Such a world-feeling characterizes the period from Homer to Aeschylus in Greek culture, when their civilization suddenly sprang free of the past into full flower; it characterizes the Renaissance, the time of Shakespeare, when the medieval yoke was finally escaped; and it characterizes our own time, when science has cut down so much that nourished our ancestors' thought and ways.

It is at least a tenable theory—since here we have on our side so much of the poetry which the race has agreed to prefer—that the world-feeling of despair which emerges from an age offers a poet his greatest opportunity for the symbolization of feeling of the finest quality. For here is the grandest of all antagonisms—Man against the Universe. Man may escape men by retiring to nature or the monastery. But how shall Man escape the Universe? How shall Agamemnon escape the curse upon Atreus' unhappy brood? When we read the glorious verse of *Lear*—so purged of “ideas”, the symbols so unadulterated by thought, the feeling emerging so purely, we call the poetry fine. But the “fineness” inheres in the purity of the symbols as well as in the language.

Man in the figure of the old king comes to us as the *weltanschauung* of the Renaissance presented him to Shakespeare, as the symbol for all men living at the time:

. . . I will do such things—  
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be  
The terrors of the earth . . .

There are Thomas More and Raleigh, Pico della Mirandola and Michelangelo; all living men who felt the freedom and exhilaration which flowed into them when medievalism died; there is Renaissance Man. And the Universe, as the same *weltanschauung* presented it to Shakespeare, comes to us symbolized in the rotten hovel in which Lear rots, too, to madness beneath the storm:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these? . . .

. . . You think I'll weep:  
No, I'll not weep.  
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart  
(*Storm and tempest*)  
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,  
Or ere I'll weep. O, Fool! I shall go mad!

There is the grand antagonism; the perfect symbols, the perfect language, the perfect form—and, consequently, the pure feeling.

If we prefer Shakespeare to Wordsworth it is not, therefore, that he has a superior "philosophy". For what is Shakespeare's philosophy? We prefer Shakespeare because he is only the true poet, whereas Wordsworth is too often the philosopher. Because Shakespeare, unlike Wordsworth, has no doctrine, has only feeling, is only mimetic.

## VI.

So we may demand of poetry only that it represent feeling, the time-mood of the period in which the poet writes. That and nothing else. There is nothing, therefore, that a "philosophical" critic can say about Dante as a poet, though such a critic (or scholar) may properly discuss Aristotle, whom Dante knew. Instead, the

just critic of poetry will ask only whether Medieval Man and the Medieval Universe are represented by fitting symbols in the *Divine Comedy*, and whether the spectacle of Medieval Man living in the Medieval Universe, as Dante represents this spectacle, evokes in the reader of the poem the world-feeling of the thirteenth century. Is the poem mimetic of the time-mood? For feeling is never lost to humanity, though its armies and crowns and governments may, like Ozymandias, be swallowed up by sand.

Consequently, let us return politics to the politicians, philosophy to the philosophers, and religion to the religionists: Dryden, Goethe, and Milton will then remain to us as poets rather than as the encyclopedias of wisdom on mundane affairs which they are so often designated. And if this means cutting away portions of their supposed "poetry", both they and poetry will gain more than is lost. For what remains after the exclusion of foreign matter will be poetry itself—immaculate verse, purely conceived and finely executed, living and secure.

Of form and language, or style, I have said nothing. But the consideration of the rendering of symbols by perfect language in suitable forms must ever be the chief concern of criticism which attempts the elucidation of poetry. Is the *terza rima* a suitable form for the thirteenth-century time-mood? For his purposes, is Dante's language a perfect instrument of expression? These are not small questions. For the judgment of style, as Longinus says, is the last and crowning fruit of long experience.

by Merrill Moore

### HAEPHAESTIAD

Time and again Vulcan reshod your claws  
With tempered steel and polished ivory,  
But the day is near when you will hear him say:  
'It is forbidden by irrevocable laws.'

*by J. N. Oldham*

## A MATTER OF IDIOM

### THE EFFECT OF SCIENCE ON CONTEMPORARY FICTION AND POETRY

SEVERAL plausible explanations have been offered for the characteristic temper of recent English and American literature, particularly the latter. There has been talk of post-war disillusionment, which offers an explanation very servicable as far as it goes; but neither England nor America was desolated by the war; nor by such an interpretation can we reach backward further than 1914 for even the beginnings of "disillusionment". Another explanation goes into the psychology of hate, with special application to the writers of the Midwest. This line of approach has the advantage of going back before the turn of the century and tracing a cumulative hate of certain sectional characteristics. We see the crest of that wave of hate in Sinclair Lewis' merciless and notoriously unsympathetic roasting of the small town and of certain professions. But this line of thought has the disadvantage of failing to explain to an equal degree the outlook of writers outside the Midwest. Both explanations are somewhat glib, and both find their acceptors.

Regardless of the special degree of validity of any present interpretation of existing literary phenomena, it is evident that habits of thought, and to a certain extent even subjects of thought, have been changed. Writers have deserted the softer and more agreeable spots of a senescent romanticism, and have wandered over the wastelands of a comfortless cynicism, guided chiefly, we suspect, by the somewhat ghoulish glimmer of a Freudian torch. What they have discovered has not been particularly heartening. Like Lucifer, they have felt a sense of something lacking in the established order, and have set out to change it; the result has been another bonfire.

Succeeding generations discover the lack of agreement between

man's face and those parts not on display, between his professions and his actions. Most generations call it hypocrisy and pass over it as a part of the natural order of things; they make no fuss about it. Other generations in their religious enthusiasm call it the Devil, and try to preach it out of men, or they even resort to fatalism and predestination with its companion doctrine of the Elect. Those two sorts of generations are typical: one is concern; the other is unconcern—and there is hardly a middle ground, for unconcern itself is something of a mean state, and concern will inevitably tend toward either one extreme or the other. The extremists are more interesting, for they exercise themselves more; they even get busy and talk and write a great deal about the unworthiness of man; and since they have, without much aid, discovered this unworthiness, they describe it in terms of their own age, again without a great deal of help from other writers and talkers. The consequence is that they use the vocabulary which they have at hand; they classify the various aspects of man's depravity according to their own system of thought; and, most important of all, two similar generations saying the same things often remain mutually unintelligible. It is necessary to remember this last statement, for Lucifer and Isaiah have something of the same urge behind them.

The present generation of objectors appears to be particularly unintelligible because of the quaintness of its idiom. It uses neither the language of the pulpit nor that of the lecture room, nor even that of the market; for it has found that all these idioms are false and equivocal, that they fall too easily into metaphor and are misled by a figure. It has turned instead to a newer idiom, one which gives the same place to the subconscious and the physical which Jonathan Edwards' idiom gave to the Devil. This new idiom is in part the language of behaviouristic psychology, and Freud is the Calvin thereof. Its predestination is general and racial, and there is scant recognition of a principle of election; in fact, the Freudian biography of Lincoln has already appeared. The Strachey school of biography is largely the result of the standard behaviouristic rule of judgment, which says that in cases where two motives, a high and a low, are possible, the low is to be taken as the real motive and the high as only the ostensible. It is unnecessary to point out that the same principle is worked and

overworked in the novel and the short story, and that physical eroticism bulks large in our "suggestive" poetry.

The natural trend of such teachings is to cause the learner and the proponent to give themselves up altogether and become beastly in a neo-Epicureanism or to watch themselves carefully lest they be betrayed by falling into conventional and unguarded reactions. The conventional somehow is regarded as ungenuine for the individual simply because it is taken as true of society as a whole. In other words, nothing is genuine in man save depravity; all goodness is superimposed, and therefore false. Only a translation of terms is needed to identify this doctrine with that of original sin.

The picture as a whole is hardly so dark as all that, but remembering that the zealot in any cause is tremendously concerned, that concern is likely to run to extremes in expression, and that a primary concern of our leading writers at present is to avoid the betraying and softening influences of emotionalism and its consequent lack of objective reality, let us examine the present attitude toward certain large portions of human thought and action.

## II.

The truly heroic has been increasingly in disrepute with certain of us since we first began to believe that there is a moral weakness in reacting before analysing. We have been busy with our psychology to such an extent that we have seen stimuli and responses and interesting and "revealing" reactions, but have forgotten to value a literary work or a literary character except as an illustration of certain vaguely-understood principles or "tendencies". We have been mastering an argot which is in large part a pedantic iteration of already more or less current terminology. All the while, however, we have remained interested in human beings. The difference is that our interest has taken an unprecedented turn, and we have a considerable laity talking and writing in terms of "folk ways", "sociological significance", "abnormal psychology"—the results of this latter have been deadening—, and "typical" and "group reactions". We have been at much pains to explain away everybody and everything from Queen Elizabeth to matriarchy in the South Sea Islands.

All in all, we have done such a good job of retagging humanity and its idiosyncracies that we squirm in our seats when a speaker who is not initiate to our ways of thinking and speaking gives expression to any of the heroic emotions. We will not tolerate admiration or awe, because we have succeeded in explaining away the situation which engenders such emotional reaction on the part of the untrained. Those reactions are naïve and natural—not to be permitted by the trained thinker. Sentiment notoriously leads to sentimentality; so the sure way to avoid the latter is to choke the former—strangle it in impersonality and detachment. The emotions are not trustworthy, for they destroy the convenience of objectivity; they betray. The only adequate defense against the results of emotionalism is to bind oneself securely to an objective reality, and according to the oft-quoted laws of habit-forming, permit no exception. If one is unwilling to trust himself to the vagaries of his natural enthusiasms, if he has learned to feel chagrined after some revelation of emotion—if, in short, he is unwilling to make frequent shifts from what he calls the seeming reality of moments of emotional intensity to what he thinks of as objective, and therefore true, reality—, he must simply deny himself any indulgence in emotional manifestation.

There is an evident discrepancy between the reality of emotional experience and the reality of periods of less intense feeling; and this discrepancy is interpreted as exclusive: one reality is the true one—the other is a delusion. Persons of feeling avoid objectiveness; persons of intellect eschew sentiment. It is with the latter group that we are at present concerned.

### III.

Just as the orator must become a lecturer, so the preacher must remain impersonal, cool, and detached; he must not lay claim to the fires of prophecy or the purging truth by which men are saved from the damnation of their own iniquity. The same stigma of emotionalism attaches to the preacher which attaches to the traducer of the same human weaknesses for other ends. He who uses such methods is considered dishonest; for if his reasons are cogent, why does he not present them in terms of objective reality? Why does he play the demagogue? And the answer of the objectivist is that the man has nothing to say which can rightly be

called real, or that he is badly hampered and misunderstood because of using an equivocal idiom. If the preacher's images belong—as they often do—to an outmoded cosmology, then the evident facts of human discovery (science) and the newer and livelier cosmogony built thereon send the older and more naïve accounts begging: the preacher is trying to dupe his audience. On the other hand, if any attempt is made to reconcile the two idioms, the result is seldom more satisfactory. This is true because the preacher arrives at his cosmos through a ready and unweighing faith; the word is final and absolute (*Scriptus est*); whereas the questioner finds his cosmos in other writings, based upon man's observation of the physical universe; and he even rejects all talk of the head, the heart, and the soul, because he sees no basis in biology and psychology for the faculties attributed to these vital organs—indeed, he has not yet found objective evidence of the last.

There is, then, likewise, an evident discrepancy between the reality experienced by the acceptor of a religious creed and its implications, and the reality discovered by the thinker who uses the results of Galileo, Newton, Freud, Watson, *et al.*, to make no mention of Darwin and Huxley and Havelock Ellis. The believer has the path of least resistance; but the thinker chooses that sort of truth which he infers from facts rather than that sort which is dependent on "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." In other words, we have still the opposition between the romanticist with time-honoured terms on the one hand and the rationalist with a special idiom on the other.

#### IV.

The shift from a system of realities built upon the facts of emotional existence to a system built upon a sometimes impartial, sometimes prejudiced, observation of physical facts has made over many of our novels into pathological case-histories. This tendency has been definitely operative from the time of *Elsie Venner* through *An American Tragedy*. It has not been exclusively operative, however, as a comparison of the latter with *Jude the Obscure* will illustrate. In *Jude the Obscure*, there is the old standard system of values arrived at through feeling—emotional values. The reality of human worth or worthlessness is taken as

a major premise. Jude remains obscure and unhappy because he is what he is; his worth is limited. Sue goes back to her husband because of an inward power which she cannot escape. The element of chance and coincidence is negligible in a consideration of the turns of human character. In *An American Tragedy* very scant consideration is given to the possibilities of human worth. Clyde is a victim of chance and of universal biological urges; his worth or lack of worth as an individual does not enter into Dreiser's picture. His particular weaknesses are clearly derived from a special combination of typical human characteristics. Approximately this same combination occurs so often that it is a sort of type—just one of the many possible. The same thing is true of most of the other characters of the book. The idea of individual worth is so remote that the dignity or depravity of man as a positive and its opposed negative do not come into a consideration of the characters. Both Hardy and Dreiser emphasize the natural and inevitable futility of the average human life; but they write in different idioms.

Hardy's is the older idiom; it is egocentric, man-centered, subjective in all its judgments, regardless of the degree of objectivity achieved by the writer; it looks within the man *from* within the man. Such a point of view must inevitably produce the Hardian thesis that man's fate lies within himself. Dreiser's is the newer idiom; it is centered not in the man, but in the race, if at all. It is based on a set of objectively-built-up generalisations, physiological for the most part. Dreiser's thesis is accordingly the converse of Hardy's: that man has no fate other than that of circumstance; and that his own existence and characteristics themselves are as easily traceable to the external and the objective as are the incidents which befall him after the beginning of his individual existence.

The two philosophies are capable of equally universal and central application, each, of course, by proficient masters. If that statement be true, then the new idiom may be expected to produce a legitimate system of art. Indeed, it is now busily challenging the older idiom, whose truths are already well known; whereas the greatest obstacles to the new come from the necessity of inductively building up its system of generalisations.

There is no question, then, that the realities of a system based

on feeling are of a different nature from those of a system built in accordance with scientific methodology.

## V.

One of the chief difficulties of this new system for interpreting our cosmos—the purpose of all idioms—is the concern which it has had to give to its own methods. It has had not only to develop its concepts into a comprehensive system, but to develop a vocabulary as well. It has had to twist old word-meanings and coin new terms. It has been busy with attempts at exactness. It has been engaged in sporadic sorties into the territory of the idiom of feeling—a practice known as debunking. It has tried to clear ground and sow seed at the same time, and as a result has been taken for two powers: for darkness, in its debunking practices, and for light in its constructive processes. In fact, it has been engaged so spectacularly in the destruction of its rival that relatively little has it been employed in the supreme degree of constructiveness, the production of a “literature of power”.

Only through a synthesis of the subject-matter of the new idiom with the enthusiasms and the concern for emotional values of the old, does poetry come from the new idiom. And that poetry, like all other, is not widely read and celebrated in these days, for, generally speaking, our changing realities have outrun poetry, which has been slow to find motives for itself in the affairs of present major concern: poetry has refused to concern itself with the acquisitions of man, and remains interested in man and his thoughts and feelings, chiefly the latter.

Perhaps it is not entirely out of order to refer again to the author of *Elsie Venner* to illustrate the meaning of the synthesis of a new subject-matter with the enthusiasms of a romantic idiom. In “The Living Temple” we have a romantic handling of an old idea—the body as a temple—with a new turn given it by the poetising of exact knowledge. Coming down closer to the present, however, we note a much more impressive example of the synthesis of new subject-matter with traditional methods of treatment. Alfred Noyes’ *The Torchbearers* reveals the human interest in the heroic achievements of science; and his essay, “A Mountain Observatory”, is a statement of the author’s recognition of the poetic values of human endeavour in the fields of exact

knowledge. Masters and Sandburg seem to be more concerned with the results of a system and their effects on the isolated individual than with a more generalised attempt to analyse and synthesise ideas and trends.

## VI.

Just as no language is ever new, but is built up through new combinations and intermixtures of languages already in existence, and thus has terms and constructions in common with its parent languages—so is it with habits of thought which we are pleased to call new. That which I call the new idiom has its origins in scientific rationalism; but it uses the standard forms of literature, and consequently is coloured by, and confused with, the imaginative, even the romantic. It is, then, a synthetic product and, as such, the colour of one or the other of its sources usually predominates; the choice of subject-matter and the method of treatment vary as the writer's training leads him toward the emotional or the rational.

This latter statement may be partially illustrated by the following examples. If the writer is a man of knowledge, then the relative majesty of nature as revealed in scientific study will lead him to write of his experiences from the point of view of the scientist: he will be a De Kruif or a Slosson or a Hudson, whose primary interest is in the minutiae, and for whom more purely human values are secondary; that is, knowledge will be the cause and emotional reaction the effect, as in "The Living Temple". If, on the other hand, he is a man of feeling, his interest will be directed more on man as a creature of sentiment. He will recognize the importance of man's experience to man. More important still, he will know that the essential reasons for scientists as well as for poets are reasons connected with man's will to power—the same will to power which creates prophets and poets and kings. The will to power is deeply human, subjective; it needs not to be explained; it is universal enough that both the urge and its results, under certain circumstances, are proper subject-matter for poetry. Accordingly, the man of feeling will look on human achievement from what we shall call the human or sentimental point of view. His chief knowledge is of man as a subjective creature; so he will strike to the core of the human

significance of man's activities, and by simply extending the domain of his appreciations to include another new province of human knowledge and action, will make the conquests of man in the fields of science as truly the subject of literature as are his conquests in all other realms of activity. He will "dip into the future far as human eye could see" and thereby prove that there is a kinship between the poetical imagination and the "technical imagination". He will be present at the *première* of the new hundred-inch telescope, and will record the experience as other true poets have recorded other great moments in the lives of men.

By virtue of its increasingly representative character, the new idiom in our literature is becoming not merely a medium for cheap debunkery and shallow anti-Rotarianism, but perhaps a worthy and useful addition to the larger language of literary discourse. It is even now passing from its upstart stage; its purveyors are realizing that the manners of the smart-Aleck are palling; and even though we are turning back toward sentiment, we are not forgetting the subject-matter, especially the biology and the psychology, which certain disagreeable gentlemen have brought to our attention. The chastening influence of their over-advertised exposé of society will, and does, count as nothing when balanced against the popularising of the facts from which they have drawn many amusing inferences. Let not the irony of this situation be over-emphasized, nor let it be entirely forgotten.

The inclusiveness of the new idiom is breaking up its erstwhile concentrated force, and is distributing it in smaller portions over a wider range; so that what was, and is, the special idiom of a limited number is at the same time being received as one of the accepted points of view for literary interpretation in general. The scope of this point of view begins, of course, with the biological sciences and includes in one way or another most of the divisions of the human scene from sociology and its related affairs through physical and chemical interpretations of man, his behaviour, and his universe; and it is now inevitably mixing with that which is soft and sentimental in man to produce, in an oblique phase, passable prose and acceptable poetry.

by *George Coffin Taylor*

## THE MODERNITY OF SHAKESPEARE

OUR most representative thinkers of today refer to Shakespeare as very distinctly below their own intellectual level. No other contribution to that puzzling variety of the superiority complex, at present devastating the modern temper, could possibly be more entertaining. The force of tradition in English criticism is unbelievably strong. So many great Shakespeareans have for so many hundred years let fall the suggestion that Shakespeare was an ultra-conservative aristocrat, strong on the side of authority, that it has become a custom nowadays always so to refer to him. Thus it comes that even so just and great a critic as Tucker Brooke is led into saying:

That entrancing, brilliant moss-back, Will Shakespeare, must have been one of the last men in London with whom an up-to-date Elizabethan would have thought of discussing politics or religion, or geography or current affairs.

This is not the nasty, irresponsible jab of some great American "Smart-Aleck". It is the deliberate conclusion of one of America's most distinguished Shakespeareans. More incredible still, most of the great Shakespeareans who seek to find Shakespeare, the man, drop the hint that he is a thinker for whom the modern reader can have little, if any, respect.

Obviously, if scholarship had deliberately conspired to cut Shakespeare completely off from a generation in need of his breadth and sanity more than any other since his death, it could not have hit upon a more effective method of doing this than by conceding Shakespeare titanic dimensions as artist and then proceeding to describe him not only as suckled in a creed outworn, but distinctly below the intellectual level of his own age. Is

Shakespeare worth rescuing from this artistic limbo to which the literary critics of sociological bias are fast relegating him? Shift the emphasis from his conservative points of view to his radical and, presto, the thing is done!

It is only fair to concede at the start, that of the immense body of facts which two hundred and fifty years of research-digging has unearthed about Shakespeare the man, (including even Mr. Hotson's amazing discoveries of late), not one is convincing as to what the man Shakespeare actually believed. Concede, moreover, that all attempts to surmise what Shakespeare believed personally about any subject end by leading one into a fool's circle. These admissions cannot alter the fact that not one thought ever passed through the mind of Shakespeare's characters which had not previously passed through *his*. Impossible as it is to know, therefore, anything whatever of Shakespeare's personal convictions, it is by no means impossible to know a vast deal about his thought.

With this in mind, why not run over a few of the outstanding phases of present-day thought as emphasized by most representative thinkers, and agree on what, not in technical science or philosophy, but in common sense, is considered modern?

## I.

Heading the list of modern attitudes, and including possibly many of the others, is *the questioning spirit*. Connected perhaps with that method which modern science sees fit to apply to its study of all material and immaterial matters, the experimental method, the questioning spirit of the modern philosophical and semi-philosophical thinker of today has challenged every known value of the past. Put in the crucible and grind to powder, subject to acid tests all authoritative truths, accepted ideals, traditions, and values of previous generations of men. Accept nothing unless it works. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Joseph Wood Krutch, Bernard Shaw, Randall—all thinkers called representative—are characterized by this questioning quality of mind. Constructive in many respects, this is also the most devastating force of modern times. Before its march have gone down in the minds of many the old ideas as to God, as to society, as to our whole conception of woman if you are a man—as to man if you are a

woman—as to marriage, as to love, as to all the forces that have motivated the youth of all past times to the actual living through of the years allotted them—honor, patriotism, loyalty, friendship, and the rest. Certainly a very considerable body of persons, reputedly leading thinkers, would have us believe that all these have been junked.

The questioning spirit, then, so let it be. What present day artist has more of it than Shakespeare? The questioning spirit plays like a veritable vein of fire through his works in infinite variety. It insults the intelligence of even the average reader to suggest Hamlet in this connection. He is too obvious to mention. Where is there in modern English literature any character so clearly a manifestation of the questioning spirit? Like many of his modern brothers, he walks through life with a huge question mark dangling forever a few inches ahead of him. His is the same great hunger as ours. Sceptically, he analyzes each and every value of life, even his own being. One never catches Hamlet alone without finding him searching and probing into the most dangerous mysteries of life. The most hackneyed speech in the English tongue, "To be or not to be," what is it but a carefully balanced debate as to whether even the elemental fact of life itself is, after all, worth the whistle?

Less obvious instances of the questioning spirit in Shakespeare than Hamlet may prove to be convincing. Scattered up and down the length and breadth of Shakespeare's plays are audacious youngsters, respecters of no persons, admirers of no institutions, attacking at will all values, disembalming all mummies, throwing all traditions to the winds. These are the master realists of Shakespeare ignored by a long line of Shakespearean critics ringing forever the changes on "Shakespeare's romanticism." In *Troilus and Cressida* is conspicuous, perhaps, the most intensely modern spirit. Here Shakespeare bears down more heavily than in any other play on that side which reduces all love and all honor to laughter and scorn. But always in his plays just a trifle more emphasis on the side on which he threw it in *Troilus and Cressida* would have caused the idealism of love and honor to go under! Biron in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Faulconbridge, the bastard, in *King John*, Mercutio, are sworn brothers in this: they can all sear love to the bone, reduce it to its apparently bestial

essentials, desentimentalize it, make it walk on the all fours of its animality. Biron and Mercutio mainly anatomicize love, Faulconbridge honor. Every fool in Shakespeare acts also in the capacity of a disembalmer of these two, love and honor. The melancholy Jacques serves this corrective comic function too. One side of Hamlet serves to idealize them, the other to cauterize them. It is unnecessary to enumerate all the characters in the plays who serve the at-times salutary purpose of keeping one's feet planted squarely on the earth as to these two matters, to disillusion us, to reduce love to its purely physical basis, honor to egotism, selfishness, and absurdity. Iago, beyond all the other characters in Shakespeare, reduces love to bestial essentials, honor to hideous selfishness. This is the essence of his philosophy of life, the air he breathes. Cut him off from his cynicism and, like many today, Iago would suffocate.

Shakespeare could, like any modern, whenever he saw fit, divest romance of every shred of its romantic qualities through the questioning spirit. Of course he gives no sign of accepting either realism or romanticism as a creed in any narrow or bigoted sense as is done today. We fall into our little camps and schools of thought. Shakespeare did not. His interest in life was apparently never that of the doctrinaire or the academician. He was too great an artist to be drawn into such folly.

And in good time, too, the questioning spirit led Shakespeare to take the most difficult and advanced of all the modern points of view in an age given more than the present to a belief in the supernatural, in an age, too, when it was dangerous to do this, not simply swimming with the tide as today. Despite the thousands of pages written as to Shakespeare's actual belief in witches, ghosts, and the like (because judges, and others who should, even in those days, have known better, believed in them) despite the fact that Shakespeare uses a vast amount of supernatural and celestial machinery as magnificent background for his plays even as is done to this day—despite all this, the out-and-out sceptical disbelief as to the whole matter of the supernatural is to be found in his plays phrased exactly as a modern man would express it, only a trifle more adequately. Hotspur, one of Shakespeare's finest gentlemen, and Edmund the Bastard in *Lear*, one of Shakespeare's most cynical villains, will illustrate as well as any. When

Glendower, leader of the Welsh, tells Hotspur that when he was born, "the heavens were full of fiery shapes and that the whole earth shook marvelously," Hotspur replies, "so would it have done had my mother's cat but kittened." Glendower in anger replies, "I can call spirits from the vasty deep." Hotspur replies, "Why so can I and so can any man, but will they come, when you do call them?" Shakespeare had not used Reginald Scot, the Houdini of his age, in vain. The grand Renaissance sceptic in Shakespeare is Edmund the Bastard in *Lear*. Not by so much as a hair's breadth can one distinguish his satire on belief in the supernatural from that of today. It was, I think, not so many months ago that a learned professor walking beneath the stars with me in Chapel Hill said half seriously,

"I wonder if all the terrible disasters coming down on us these days, banks breaking, breadlines stretching, have anything to do with this amazing unnatural winter with its warm days and warmer nights?"

I quote Edmund in reply,

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behavior,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in by a divine thrusting on—an admirable evasion of whoreson man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star.

What modern speaks more contemptuously of the supernatural than this? What modern is today replying so convincingly as does Edmund here to the modern tendency to attempt to pass all the evil in us on to the broad shoulders not of the Fates but to their twin sisters, heredity and environment?

## II.

Evidently, then, to discover any essential difference between Shakespeare and the moderns, one must inquire into some attitude of the modern mind other than the questioning spirit. Modern attitude number two perhaps is more promising. If there is any one matter in which the modern man may feel absolutely

assured that modernity is far and away ahead of other civilizations, it is in his attitude towards the common man, the under dog, the unfortunate of society. The insane, the weak, the sick, the poor, all the afflicted of whatever sort, are now cared for as never before in recorded history; the enormous funds invested in hospitals, asylums, and social endowments make this unmistakably clear. Perhaps the most amazing manifestation of the advanced attitude of the social democrat is to be seen in our consideration today for the criminal in his more comfortable quarters. This humane feeling and thought has run beyond sociology into vast provinces of modern drama, and permeates literature everywhere. Galsworthy in *Justice* and his other dramas, Maugham in *Human Bondage* and his dramas, Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom*, illustrate the extremes of this sentiment about as well as any. Surely no other age than ours has ever tended to give so freely of its sympathy to all unfortunates of whatever nature or to palliate and excuse the criminal. Our generosity in the matter of excusing any human action however terrible or debased is in part, of course, based on the assumption that if one can understand the cause he will excuse the result, whatever that result may be; that environment or heredity will explain and thereby excuse any moral obliquity of the individual in such fashion as to relieve him of all personal responsibility in regard to whatever he may do. This, I imagine, is why in most of our dramas we are so frequently called upon to lavish sympathy upon those who, in any other age than this, would be thought to be not only the unfortunate and the afflicted of mankind, but, in numerous cases, the most degraded and debased specimens of humanity. The number of such individuals in the drama of today is beyond enumeration here. Any one who makes the least pretense to keeping up with modern literature at all can recall characters innumerable who descend to unspeakable depths of depravity so handled by the dramatists as to be relieved of all responsibility in the matter by the dramatist's keeping always before his audience the suggestion that with like environment, with the same heredity and under similar circumstances, they might have done the same thing. The same process of reasoning might just as well be employed in extenuation of the offences of our four-footed brethren, say the hog or the tiger; and, if one could only be just

enough to consider, when either tiger or mad-dog is coming for his throat, that by virtue of its environment and heredity the poor creature can do nothing else, he would never pull the trigger. Surely, then, no one can gainsay the moderns the right to claim that in their sympathetic attitude towards the unfortunate, the oppressed, the criminal, they are sharply differentiated from other and past civilizations.

We are, of course, on dangerous ground here. For social democracy has with many today become the modern religion. Around this religion are now playing hypocrisies which cast into the shadow the old hypocrisies we love to satirize, and around it are leaping up again the fierce fanaticisms of the middle ages. But, if one can succeed in keeping cool about the most difficult of all matters in regard to which the modern man finds it possible to preserve his equilibrium, he will find that there are plenty of spokesmen in Shakespeare who indicate clearly that the same ideas which are passing now through our minds in regard to these matters passed also through Shakespeare's; that, while never a reformer to the point of soft sentimentalism as is the case with many today, by and large he was not essentially different from the humane moderns. Conceded immediately is the fact that no man ever stated with fiercer intensity the antipathy of the conservative aristocrat against petty time-servers and foul smelling mobs than do certain characters in Shakespeare. Thus Coriolanus is only one among a dozen supermen in the plays who show the utmost contempt and scorn for the herded moron. "What would you have, you curs, that like not peace nor war" is to be found not once but a dozen times in the plays. These expressions have burned so deeply into the brains of the social democrats of today as to make Shakespeare a bitter pill to take. This attitude they cannot stomach even in the domain of art. But if the modern sets this down as Shakespeare's 'settled' attitude towards humanity at large, it is due to his own littleness and not to Shakespeare's. Mr. Stoll, held in high respect both in this country and abroad as a Shakespeare iconoclast, is most illuminating in this connection because his statement is so utterly at variance with what to me seems to be the truth. "Shakespeare," he says, "more than any other poet of his age reflected the settled prejudices of that age." Now Shakespeare was no Bolshevik but, if one lends

an open ear to other than Shakespeare's conservative aristocrats, he may think he is.

His spokesmen against the upper crust of society, institutions, government, and the money power, are his fools, his eccentrics, and his two great madmen, Lear and Timon. Jacques, playing safe in *As You Like It*, asks that he may wear the coat of a fool in order that like a fool, "a privileged man," he may speak his mind freely against the powerful and great.

"Give me," he says,

"as large a charter as the wind,  
To blow on whom I please; for so fools have."

"give me leave

To speak my mind, and I will through and through  
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world  
If they will patiently receive my medicine."

"What women in the city do I name,  
When that I say the city woman bears  
The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders."

"Thus most invectively he pierceth through  
The body of the city, country, court  
Yea, and of this our life."

Almost all of Shakespeare's Fools speak with the utmost disrespect of all persons in authority,—kings, chief justices, bank presidents, senators on the bench, fine ladies, and noble lords. Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida* is the foulest mouthed in this regard, but they are all pretty much the same in this matter of embalming the popular mummies. Long before Erskine wrote *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* Thersites had reduced Helen to a "rag and a bone and a hank of hair" and Agamemnon to a mere monkey; long before Shaw had reduced Cleopatra to a shop girl, Shakespeare, even in *Antony and Cleopatra*, had reduced her to a cow on a hot day in June:

"Yon ribald nag of Egypt  
The brize upon her, like a cow in June,  
Hoists sails and flies."

Pass on to the ravings of Lear and recall the most respectable and conventional of English poets leveling his guns on all society: particularly at the unequal distribution of wealth, at the

Supreme Courts of the country, at the wholesale corruption of all orders of society through the money power of the land:

"See how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief.  
Hark in thine ear. Change places; and handy dandy,  
which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast  
seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?"

"Ay, Sir."

"And the creature run from the cur? There thou  
mighthest behold the great image of authority; a  
dog's obeyed in office."

"Through tattered robes great vices may appear,  
Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sins with gold  
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks.  
Arm it in rags, and a pigmy's straw will pierce it."

"Let the superfluous and lust dieted man,  
. . . that will not see because he doth not feel,  
Feel your power quickly:  
So distribution will undo excess  
And each man have enough."

Now this is a king talking, one who has been through the mill, as it were. If this does not satisfy as to its modern tone in its attacks on the body politic, turn to another madman, Timon of Athens, as he discovers and digs up great quantities of glittering gold from the earth. As he looks at it lying at his feet what does he say that it does to us all? First as to the scholarly professor or the poet?

"The learned pate ducks to the golden fool." As to the rest, what?

"Why this ye gods,  
Will lug your priests . . . from your sides,  
. . . this yellow slave  
Will knit and break religions, bless the accursed,  
Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves  
And give them title, knee and approbation  
With senators on the bench. This it is  
That makes the wapen'd widow wed again;  
She, whom the spital house and ulcerous sores  
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and splices  
To the April day again."

In his fools, then, in his eccentrics and in his madmen, Shakespeare has passed from his attack on mobs and the common man to attacks on the judicial system, the courts of law and equity and to the throne itself, to corruption in all high places, even to the strongholds of the dreaded money power. He is no longer after little animals. He is hunting big game now. And notice with what circumspection he does it. Though no pussy-footer, he

walks softly over burning ground. Ben Jonson, with whom Shakespeare was on most intimate terms as a friend, had tried talking about those in authority rather too obviously in his *Sejanus*, was called before the Council and accused of treason. He was thrown into prison for his part in *Eastward Ho* and condemned to lose his ears. Other of Shakespeare's friends had been thrown into jail for their pains. Shakespeare, though bold, was not ambitious for martyrdom and so he let his fools and madmen say these things. One can imagine him shrugging his shoulders, if cornered by the censor, and asking if he was to be held responsible for the speeches of his idiotic marionettes.

The assumption then that Shakespeare was able to take the sympathetic point of view only of those in authority and never of the under dog, as generally supposed, is most amusing. He who poured a wealth of human sympathy into eight hundred different persons, expressing their delights and their agonies in eight hundred different voices, could not in the very nature of things have done this little thing of which he is accused.

### III.

And this leads to the most amazing of all the present day accusations against 'Shakespeare as differing from the moderns, to-wit,—that he passed personal moral judgment on his characters. Mr. Stoll once more comes to our aid by saying the thing so well that to my mind is not true about Shakespeare. "And neither in comedy," he says, "or in tragedy has he the *forgiveness* of our psychological dramas. If a scoundrel is a bastard or is mean of birth, the fact is not viewed as an extenuating circumstance but is turned to a reproach." Modern "forgiveness of spirit" has perhaps brought us to a point of soft sentimentality in comparison with which the mid-Victorian is hardboiled, but for the sake of comparison, assume, if you will, that the modern point of view is sane. Did, then, Shakespeare in his softer and milder moods ever take this point of view? Despite the statements of a legion of critics to the contrary, he most certainly did. He is, in fact, by and large, in this matter again far more modern than the moderns and, unlike representative writers of today, he indeed never condemns. He occupied the very position we are today struggling ineffectually to

reach. Shakespeare never condemns. He starts his characters, lets them loose to do as they naturally would, and without pulling any strings, leaves it to the reader's judgment to do what he will with them. What modern dramatist is today doing that? Dramatists are deliberately mutilating their characters today in order to carry their points as to this or that sociological doctrine to which they are wedded. Many dramatists prostitute their own brain children! To this depth Shakespeare never descended. He was too great an artist. Shakespeare attacks neither the upper crust of society nor the lower crust. Numerous are the characters in Shakespeare which could hardly hope to escape condemnation if handled by present day dramatists. They may be chosen almost at random. There is, for example, Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, severely enforcing laws against sexual vices and in the same instant attempting to seduce Isabella. He is the whitened sepulchre of the drama. What dramatist living today could pass by a hypocrite without pausing in mid-career to preach a sermon on hypocrisy? Yet Shakespeare, realizing apparently how common hypocrisy is to mankind, having painted Angelo most revoltingly, marries him in the end to a most excellent lady who is still demented enough to fancy him as a husband. Molière sends his hypocrite, Tartuffe, to the galleys for life and in a comedy. What dramatist writing today dealing with a character who had been planning steadily for months to kill some fine fellow in the play by diabolically cruel methods would let him off as easily as Shakespeare does Shylock? It is our most tolerant modern, Mr. Shaw, who condemns Cleopatra on straight-laced moral grounds. "She is the glorification of a wanton," he says. Does Shakespeare condemn her? He paints her artistically. Condemnation does not enter into the picture at all. Instead he lavishes upon Cleopatra a wealth of artistic sympathy sufficient to satisfy even a Frenchman. Angelo is the most hypocritical of Shakespeare's characters; Cleopatra the loosest of his Bohemians. Shakespeare condemns neither. There remains his most perfect study in diabolical villainy, in refined cruelty. Does Shakespeare condemn Iago? Shakespeare suggests at the end of *Othello* what will inevitably happen to an Iago as the result of his acts, but there is no evidence that he condemns him. He leaves him instead to his own dark thoughts. He does not choose to debase him as Milton does

his great devil, Satan, and make him crawl upon his belly in the end. "By Heaven," cries Othello, "I'll know thy thoughts," and, as Kittredge points out, Othello never will know Iago's thoughts, as Iago replies, magnificent in his villainy to the end, "You cannot, though my heart were in your hand." Shakespeare kills an immense number of abominable characters in his plays. Not one of them in his authentic plays does he debase at the point of death. They die in the same spirit as his heroes. Not once in his plays does he descend below the level of art as do the modern dramatists to compel the characters of which they do not approve to die like dogs in cowardice and agony and fear. Shakespeare never condemns. Instead, one hears echoing through all of his plays the words of that one of Shakespeare's kings who had touched the lowest bottom of experience with his subjects,—Lear's words as he tries all offenders at the bar of his imaginary justice, "None does offend, none I say." If to us today Shakespeare seems to pass pharisaical judgments, it is that we, in the grip of our absurd modern superiority complexes, have become so accustomed to condemning anybody and anything which does not fall in line with our present day theories as to society, that we are dazed when confronted by the tremendously impersonal point of view of an artist of first magnitude.

## IV.

If by now it has become obvious that it is possible to continue indefinitely illustrating how Shakespeare is more modern than the moderns, why not bring the discussion to a close? In so doing, will it be possible to discuss something modern and at the same time pleasant; that is, pleasant just to normal people? Somehow moderns seem to be enjoying recently the luxury of a bath in sordidness, despair and cynicism, this being the most certain short cut to being thought intellectual. But it is possible after all to find a modern attitude with pleasant aspects. The most recent and widespread of modern mental shifts is delightful to contemplate and one is on absolutely safe ground when he calls it distinctly modern. I refer to that extraordinary shift which has come about more suddenly than any other in modern times,—the change in man's attitude towards women. What happened when Ibsen wrote *The Doll's House*, it is difficult to overstate. Man suddenly woke

up to the realization that woman had somewhat the same right to an individual existence as himself, and to the temporarily uncomfortable realization that she had possibly as much brain power as he had. A long and bitter fight ensued, leaving much wreckage in its wake. But the result was a companionship, a comradeship between men and women in which the modern thinker takes great pride. It is almost miraculous how every step in the matter of liberalizing man's attitude towards woman and woman's attitude towards man has been a drift towards the relationship of the sexes one finds in Shakespeare. One has but to turn the matter over in his mind to notice how true this is. Anyone interested in the affairs of young people must admit that Shakespeare gives all the odds to Rosalind over Orlando, in aggressiveness and brains alike. And so it is with a long list of others. If you are interested in companionship in crime, where would you look for her equal in Lady Macbeth, a better man by far than her husband. If your interests lie in the direction of debauchery or Bohemianism, where would you find the equal of Cleopatra? It is she who drinks Antony to his bed, a thing no man ever succeeded in accomplishing. If, like Mr. Shaw, you happen not to be interested in the "glorification of a wanton," turn to a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land, Juliet, who hazards all the physical dangers upon which Cleopatra often turns her back. She, again, is the equal in all respects of her lover. She takes the last hurdle at the end to which all other hurdles are as nothing with the same perfect nerve that he does. Even the gentle lady who was married to the Moor, when haled into court speaks out with the same boldness as does Othello,

"That I did love the Moor to live with him  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world."

Beatrice can cross swords in repartee with Benedick any day, any hour, and beat him with her left hand. The list of women in Shakespeare who are on an absolute parity with the men, in daring and in brains, stretches out endlessly. Fifty years before Milton, the so-called Modernist, was creating an Eve obviously inferior to Adam in reasoning faculties, "He for God only, she for God in him," Shakespeare was creating a galaxy of women, equal in all respects to his men. Hotspur and Petruchio are the only men in

Shakespeare whose mental attitude to their wives would give Ibsen's *The Doll's House* any excuse for existence. Almost three hundred years before Ibsen was writing this play another pair of Shakespeare's men and women discussed comradeship between man and wife as did Hotspur and his Kate. Portia, the woman voicing the modern woman's plea for equality in the inner counsels of her husband as well as any modern writer, says to Brutus:

"Am I yourself  
But as it were, in sort or limitation,  
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,  
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs  
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,  
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife."

Almost three hundred years before Shaw was writing *Man and Superman*, Shakespeare had created Helena, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, who runs down her husband with the more deadly relentlessness than Anne. Almost three hundred years before Barrie wrote *What Every Woman Knows*, Shakespeare had written half a dozen plays in which the husbands recognize and admit that their wives are the great factors for success in their lives. And three hundred years before scores of modern heroines were screaming at the very top of their voices for a single standard of sex morality, Emilia, wife of Iago, was telling Desdemona just before her death in exactly the tone of the modern that if the husband ranges too promiscuously in his affection, so should the woman. Says Emilia:

"Let husbands know,  
Their wives have sense like them; they see and smell,  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
As husbands have. What is it they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is: is it frailty that thus errs?  
I think it doth: and have not we affections  
Desires for sport, and frailty as men have?"

In other words, while Ibsen, Shaw, Barrie, and a host of other dramatists strain their argumentative faculties to the utmost and manipulate all of the machinery of their stagecraft to the creaking point in order to convince the modern thinker that women are the equals of men, Shakespeare creates a dozen such women, starts them talking and moving, and without having them plead their case, as did Portia and Emilia, just cited, and without the in-

terminable, long-winded debates loaded with technicalities of the modern dramas, compels us naturally to assume that women are virtually in all respects, except physical combat, the equals and often the superiors of his prominent men. In this regard, then, Shakespeare assuredly is more modern than the moderns. We have yet to catch up with him.

## V.

In conclusion it is only fair to admit how entirely impossible it is to settle these matters today or tomorrow, or on any other morrow. But if anything has here been done, however small, to expose the unfair and entirely illogical attempts of the modern social democrat, in the clothing of the literary and artistic critic, to deny to Shakespeare the vitality and courage of thought of the modern thinker, to stigmatize him as a provincial, petty minded, bigoted, superstitious sort of Elizabethan Babbitt, unsympathetic to the sufferings of any save the upper classes of England, and, by so doing relegate Shakespeare to a kind of artistic limbo, there to remain a literary curiosity for the connoisseurs of beauty but not of truth; if anything has been done to check a tendency by the weight of its own lack of reasonableness to fail, this article has served its purpose. May I suggest that Shakespeare practically always wrote with at least two types of readers in mind, only one of which, I hope, is reading this. The first of these consisted of as lawless a lot of narrow-minded low-brows as ever swarmed up from the docks and wharves of the Thames. They, to be sure, caught the rapid play of action and incident, the flash of many swords, the flow of red blood over the white of bare arms and chests, and often, very often, caught and were delighted with an abundance of filth and garbage dished out to the swinish side of his humanity, equalled only by that of our own times. There was another set for whom he always wrote, who caught the meaning of course and often revelled in all that the lowbrow needed to keep his attention on the play, but who caught much more. These were men like Walter Raleigh, the foremost English sceptic of his day, thinkers of all kinds, courtiers, philosophers, artists, poets, and a group of intellectuals as great as any age has produced. For these also Shakespeare wrote

and for himself, the greatest of them all. To them he threw out amid his lowbrow stuff the finest flashes of pure wit, magnificent philosophies culled from Plato and Plutarch, from Machiavelli and Montaigne, always redone in the Shakespearean voice, and a variety of mental attitudes towards life which enabled every type of Renaissance thinker to see his own comedy or tragedy, say in the life of a Jacques or a Hamlet. Is it too much to expect of the cultivated modern that he should be able and willing to find in Shakespeare what the intelligent in the Elizabethan audience found in him?

*by Anise Colburn*

### QUAKER WIFE

The years had come and gone, and left their weight  
Of age and weariness, patient and plain,  
She went her daily rounds but half aware  
Of the swift pageantry of sun and rain,  
Black frost and dewdrops. One small thing alone  
Still bodied romance:—as the Spring drew on  
The garden called. A bit of brittle seed  
Could hold the frail shell color of the dawn,  
The zest of all adventure! Youth itself  
Must have come back and nested in her hand  
As she went plodding out across the furrows  
To offer beauty to a grudging land,  
And coax a color from the stubborn sod,—  
A loveliness not banned by her stern God!

by Donald MacCampbell

## THE ART OF T. F. POWYS

“**A**LL our little moral sensations are upon the surface of our lives; it is the great immoralist that lies beneath. And you have not got to go very far into the lives of the people before you come upon him.” In these words, taken from the pages of *Soliloquies of a Hermit*, one finds an adequate expression of a thesis which Theodore Francis Powys attempts in all of his works to develop. Man, stripped of his virtuous mask, is little better—morally speaking—than the lower animals: greedy, cruel, and lustful. Yet by living, unmasked, on a naturalistic plane, and by yielding himself shamelessly to the various “moods of God” which normally would pass through his being, Man might more fully realize his mission on earth, which is simply to seize and enjoy the life around him, to pass his hours lazily in the sunlight, and to wax old by the measure of common, sensuous experience, assured that nothing in the end can really matter.

The peasant, even in these days, is a close approach to the unmasked human-being, and in him the natural emotions reveal themselves most shamelessly. Therefore, to temper the pride of the hypocritical townsman whom he so frankly abhors, Powys has isolated the latter’s most carefully concealed vices and, creating an imaginary peasantry of his own, has revealed them singly and uninhibited. In other words, he has made a world of his own in which the simple people who move about therein are nothing more than symbols. He has made it, moreover, out of the materials of his own English country-side—if only because he has wished it to be beautiful withal.

But before we proceed to an analysis of this world, let us first examine briefly the character of its creator. Just where, it might well be asked, does the author himself stand in relation to this

unmasking campaign which he has so subtly, and artistically, launched? The answer is that he considers himself as being neither above nor below his fellow-men, but simply apart from them. And while he is infinitely more tolerant in his attitude toward vice than toward virtue—provided, as we have said, that the former be undisguised—he nevertheless endeavors, in his own daily life, to avoid the consequences of both by cultivating the art of monotony: by eschewing such actions as might betray a tendency toward either. In his *Soliloquies of a Hermit* he tells us that it is best to ruminate like a cow. To live like a Stoic in body, and like an Epicurean in mind: this is his formula for earthly happiness. For, after all, what are the very wonderful doings of Man worth? "Very likely by doing nothing we may be going a little way on the right road, and by doing a great deal we may only be going round the same old way again, the same old way that leads to common ugly rows of houses, municipal buildings, and petrol-filled machines."

There is much in the *Soliloquies of a Hermit* that suggests both Llewelyn and John Cowper Powys—two more popular, though decidedly less talented, younger brothers who in recent years have visited America on lecture-tours. In all three alike there is the same rugged individualism, the same contempt for hypocrisy, the same naïve respect for simple sensuous experience as an end in itself. And yet it were impossible, considering their efforts as a whole, to regard them as other than three distinct personalities, with the strange, ugly, almost terrifying, genius of Theodore standing well above the very capable talents of the other two. Llewelyn is unnecessarily dogmatic, and at times offensively unsophisticated; while John Cowper's mysticism is no more convincing, despite his exquisite style, than is his romantic theory for obtaining happiness. Nevertheless, one finds numerous passages in this little book of personal meditations which might well have been written by either of these less distinguished brothers. The following, for example, is typically Powysian:

The cup I wish to drink is the cup of the earth's blood. I wish to drink deep of the silence, the deep mists, the growing corn, and the movements of birds. The very life that I feel around me should drug me, and each motion and movement and tongue of fire that I feel ought to pass like rich wine into

my being. The very stones of the road should yield up to me their thoughts . . . I have hidden my hand in a waterfall of brown hair; I have caught a hurried kiss from a breathing sunbeam. This is all we can have—all. It is impossible to get more out of the world than it can give.

For twenty years Theodore Francis Powys, living a lonely life in the tiny English village of East Chaldon, divided his time between ruminating—not exactly in cow-fashion—and writing unsalable stories which, when returned to him by unimpressed publishers, were promptly hidden away in his cupboard and forgotten. Then finally, a friend succeeded in arousing the interest of David Garnett in the manuscripts, with the result that they were hurried into print without further delay. And so it happened that the ruminator became a novelist over-night. *The Left Leg* and *Black Bryony* were both published in 1923, and the critics, sensing at once the appearance of a new and unique genius in the field of English fiction, received both books with more than casual enthusiasm. The *New York Times* hailed *Black Bryony* as "one of the year's most original contributions to literature". The *London Morning Post*, in reviewing *The Left Leg*, pointed proudly to "a new writer of unusual accomplishments". And the *Liverpool Courier* referred to the same book as a work which "falls little short of genius". One might quote further to show that each succeeding publication by T. F. Powys has met with increasing critical admiration. Today he is generally recognized among judicious reviewers as being one of the most extraordinary of the living English writers: a poet who has elected to satirize his fellows in prose, and who, for this purpose, has created an imaginary world which is not quite like anything to be found in all fiction, past or present. But to be praised by the critics is no sure mark of literary success. One must needs be read by the public. And the public, to date, has let Mr. Powys alone.

## II.

Can it be that the world of T. F. Powys is too perverse, too unremittingly satanic, to gain any real hold upon the average discriminating reader? Of the many explanations which critics have given for his neglect, certainly this is not the least plausible. Indeed, there are those who believe that, were it not for the inde-

scribable charm of his style, Powys would lose even the respect of the press. As it is, he may safely be called an author's author, for there is no man writing in England or America today who asserts a greater command over the various technicalities of prose fiction; and few excel him in sheer narrative power. Within a narrow, but carefully chosen, field he has found a new form for the novel—of which *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* should live as a classic example. But there are times when one feels certain that Powys has plotted his course through dangerous territory.

In using his peasants for the purpose of symbolizing the less attractive vices of civilized men and women—thus exposing the latter to mockery—the author has not only maligned the innocent folk whom he obviously loves but has needlessly exaggerated the vices themselves. Moreover, while he describes with humane tolerance and tireless humor the antics of his village immoralists—ever reminding us that beneath the surface we are all equally as vicious, and that honest vices are more lovable than dishonest virtues—one is still nothing loth to cleave to the traditional belief that, as Goethe once put it, Man must retain the essential illusions of life. And although in reality humanity be every bit as lustful, greedy and cruel as Powys would have us to believe, it is still consoling to defend ourselves at risk of self-deception with the thought that natural human goodness can sometimes exist apart from imbecility. Nowhere in the world of this author's fantastic imagination can encouragement for such an idea be found. With his ugly, cynical understanding of depravity, he has peopled his little villages—Mockery Gap, Norbury, Folly Down, Tadnol, and the others—with a grotesque assortment of lunatics, harlots, libertines, procuresses, unbelieving clergymen, and insatiable monsters of brutality. If presented seriously, in the manner of the modern realistic novel, these characters would disgust even the most misanthropic of readers. But fortunately Powys is anything but a realist, and much of the ugliness which he describes is redeemed by his method of approach which is always to a considerable degree poetical, and frequently intensely humorous as well. His peasants speak in the quaint Dorsetshire dialect, and they live in the picturesque Wessex countryside—both of which facts account for much of the poetic side of his work. And while they are mere

symbols—each standing for a particular human failing which is allowed to color his every action—their behaviour is so exaggerated, so distorted, that much of their wickedness can pass for pure nonsense. Critics have frequently described Powys' peasants as being both fantastic and true: fantastic inasmuch as their deportment is unreal; true inasmuch as the passions which direct their behaviour are invariably and unmistakably natural. Let us project ourselves into this crazy world and regard a few of its strange inhabitants.

There is old Mrs. Guffy whom the people do not believe to be mad until one day she is found consorting with the pigs in the sty, and eating out of the same trough with them, nozzle to nozzle; and also her daughter Jane who, in order to remove her mother, is forced to sprinkle the carrier's van with straw, and persuade the old lady that she is going to market to be sold, whereas in reality she is scheduled for a ride to the asylum. Then there is Farmer Mew who "takes a girl without even saying please", and whose habit of life is to clutch all—existence being a simple matter of continual getting. There is Fred Pim who is fond of counting: especially trees, kisses, and a maiden's underthings. There is Mr. Bugby who "regarded each new girl that he went with as a mysterious circle of wonders, to be unwrapped, frightened into docility, and at last utterly rent and discovered". There is Tom Keats whom the girls do not like because, as one Nellie Morsay put it, "e don't give 'ee nothing only kisses". There is old Truggin the sexton who "trimmed the graves all the year round with the same thought and care that a popular grocer bestows upon his shop window at Christmas time", and who firmly believes that "Life is a little matter, 'tis but a moment in a hollow tree wi' a naughty maid, 'tis now come, 'tis now gone", and that the only remedy for all the evils under the sun is a decent burial. There is young Dinah, as round as an orange and as ripe: so much of a girl that "even Mr. Cheyney's bull would wander after her in all friendliness, mistaking her apparently for another Europa." And there is Mr. Pattimore who, whenever Dinah would pass, "was forced to clench his teeth and think of the Dean's gaiters in order to prevent himself from making a sound like a neigh." Already the reader is beginning to ask what the objection can be to

such amusing unreality, such fantastic nonsense. Indeed, these peasant folk are charming enough, even lovable enough, to regard in this casual manner. But let us examine further and surprise them this time in the midst of some of their deeds.

Simon Cheney, having completed the rape of Mary Gulliver, rises from the grass to amuse himself for a few minutes by throwing stones at a near-by horse, and then walks casually homeward thinking of his next victim. Mr. Bugby, who likes to crush flies upon his window-pane, entertains himself on one occasion by beating his horse about the head and eyes with a stump of ash. James Pinnock, having caught a maiden stealing apples from his orchard, first beats her with a stick and then decides to rape her. Mr. Mew, when he finds himself unable to possess all the flowers in Madder—in keeping with his desire to clutch all things—casts down those which he has plucked and tramples angrily upon them; later the same gentleman pursues some butterflies with a stick, eager to hurt them as he hurt Mary Gillet—whom it is hardly necessary to say he has raped. Mrs. Patch, before she is gored to death by a bull, loves nothing better than to tramp upon beetles, and frequently goes out of her way to tread upon them pleasantly. A drover enjoys beating his dog over the head with a knobbed ash, and on one occasion clubs a young girl to death in the same manner. There are also any number of boys who like to stone sheep, torture frogs, and hurt wherever it is possible to do so, simply for the pleasure it affords them.

It is this very preoccupation with the immoralist in Man, this tendency to isolate only the bestial aspects of his nature and to magnify them many-fold, that has undoubtedly made enemies for Powys among the more discriminating reading-public. Perhaps it is true that civilized men and women, robbed of their moral masks, would conduct themselves in this brutish manner; but may it not be for this very reason that the masks have been called into conventional usage? Is it not, most likely, to conceal the immoralist that we have established all of our pretty little hypocrisies? And, after all, is the hypocrite not less detestable than the beast? Apparently T. F. Powys does not think so, for his art is definitely a negative response to this question. While he is laying bare in his narrative the hidden animal in Man, he is implying at the same time—by means of an ingenious stylistic

trick—that this animal can be not only charming but occasionally even amiable to behold. The trick itself is not easy to explain: it involves, for one thing, an ability to speak through form as well as through expression—through style as well as through narrative. By using an artificially simple vocabulary, which alone imparts a sort of innocence to the story, and by using beautiful, even poetic, phraseology in describing such things as rapes and murders, the author seems to feel that he can not only expose the natural propensities of civilized human-beings, but can lead the reader to believe that crimes such as these, when committed honestly, are not entirely unattractive—not without their peculiar charm. One must not forget for a moment that this peculiar charm lies not in the crimes narrated but rather in the narrator of the crimes . . .

### III.

Powys, like most naturalists, is primarily interested in problems of Love and Death. Because he has assumed a Freudian attitude toward sex he is able to arrive at the conclusion that man is essentially an immoralist; and because he sees in death the annihilation of life—with all of its values—he has come to believe that it is best to ruminate like a cow. In short, God has but two gifts to offer the children of the world: the privilege of loving, and the privilege of dying. Such is the underlying philosophy of the author's masterpiece, *Mr. Weston's Good Wine*.

Mr. Weston, a none-too-reverent conception of the deity, visits the naughty village of Folly Down, driving with his assistant Michael in a Ford car. The purpose of his visit is to offer his good wine to the merry peasantry; and for reasons that are soon made obvious he brings with him, in the back seat, his old enemy—who has assumed the form of a lion. Time stops that night in Folly Down, and as the strange merchant sets out to pass his wine about Eternity begins with doings which are not exactly holy. The vintage is of two sorts: there is the sparkling wine of Love, and the darker, headier wine of Death. And it remains for the villagers to choose which one they will drink. Some accept the headier first, and find it thoroughly satisfying; others begin with the lighter, which only increases their thirst for the stronger variety—thus bringing them the long way around to the perfect bliss.

In all of Powys' novels and short stories the characters drink one or the other of these two wines—although, of course, the symbols change. As a result, the charge of unwise repetition has been brought against him: it is felt that he has dwarfed the full growth of his remarkable talent by repeating, in one work after another, the same set of incidents, and the same set of caricatures. Indeed, the reader may always expect to find in Powys' books an unbroken series of rapes, murders, adulteries, and suicides, committed in every case by simple personifications of greed, lust, hate, and imbecility. Yet the charge is hardly a fair one, despite the appeal it must certainly make to the squeamish: for it is not this author's ambition to create elaborate and complex plots any more than it is his desire to depict great character. Indeed, this should be apparent from his very method, inasmuch as he treats life symbolically, and presents human-nature only in caricature. Interpretation of life, not reproduction of life, is his chief concern. And for the purpose of interpretation he has created an imaginary world of his own in which variety of plot and characterization can not really matter, save in so far as they suffice to express, artistically, his own appraisal of reality.

In most of his books, Powys has employed some one of his characters as a mouth-piece. For example, in *Innocent Birds* he is Reverend Thomas Tucker, who believes that "whoever adds one tittle to the work of the world, or prevents one child from playing, commits the sin that can never be pardoned". In *Kindness in a Corner* he is Reverend Silas Dottery, who asks: "How can it be possible when all things die with us when we die—every candle going out like our candle—to hurt and torment one another as we do, when we are, as we all must be, in present view of utter destruction?" Usually he assumes the part of an unbelieving clergyman, but occasionally he speaks through the mouth of a sexton, an ordinary farmer, or even—as in the fables—through the bodies of inanimate objects. Then, too, there are times when he halts the narrative to speak forth boldly in his own person. Here, invariably, the depth of his wisdom is sounded in passages which are truly unforgettable: yet the thought of the two wines is never far from the center of his mind. Even in his most poetic utterances he betrays a familiarity with the nature of Mr.

Weston's vintage—particularly the darker, and headier. As he says, stepping momentarily upon the stage in *Innocent Birds*:

When we go into the courts of summer—courts of clear colour and fair flowers and sweet scents—a shadow will come by that is best greeted with our tears. This shadow is born with all beauty, and enters into us from the very loveliness that we are beholding, and makes us learn to welcome the rude grosser hours instead of the tantalizing moments when beauty stays to sadden us.

Death, in short, taints even the loveliness of nature. Yet in the end, according to Powys, it invariably proves to be a blessing. In the fable, *Darkness and Nathaniel*, he gives full vent to his feelings upon the subject:

"Light, when he was my friend, was always promising me pleasure," said Nathaniel, holding Darkness yet nearer to his bosom. "Every morning he would say to me, in his light and airy manner, 'Run out now, Nathaniel; on the moor in the lanes you will meet a maid who will call to you to come to her.' Dear Darkness, have you anything to give?"

"I give eternal longings," replied Darkness, "and after that, true happiness."

"And what is true happiness?" asked Nathaniel.

"Death," replied Darkness.

#### IV.

Since the first three parts of this essay have been so largely devoted to a discussion of the philosophical undercurrents of T. F. Powy's art, perhaps it were well at this point to survey briefly the technical methods which have been employed in making this art possible.

In *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* one finds convincing proof of his astounding powers of craftsmanship. Indeed, as William Hunter has pointed out in an admirable monograph,<sup>1</sup> the sly facility with which the author succeeds in introducing his symbolism into this work is truly remarkable. Actually it is not until the reader has advanced well into the body of the novel that he becomes conscious of the fact that Mr. Weston is the Almighty, that his Ford car is a symbol of the world, that the good wine which he offers is

<sup>1</sup>NOVELS AND STORIES OF T. F. POWYS, Minority Press, Cambridge, England.

the wine of Love and Death, and that the lion is none other than Satan himself—this despite the carefully placed hints which are scattered throughout the pages from the very beginning. The same subtle method, incidentally, is used by Powys in presenting the symbol of the old oak tree in the same novel: not until many strangely amorous happenings have occurred thereunder does the reader suspect the tree to be the seat of ancient phallic love. Indeed, one must be ever on the lookout for such symbols, for Powys is as well grounded in Hellenism as in our own Hebraic mythology—although the Bible is unquestionably nearer to him, and represents perhaps his most constant source of inspiration.

The Bible—and, next to the Bible, John Bunyan—has exerted the strongest influence over him. But one must not assume from this that Powys' love for the Scriptures has been extended to the Church itself. On the contrary, never does his power of irony appear to better advantage than in those passages where he has set out to mock Christianity. The following discourse by old Truggin will serve to illustrate this power, which is one of the author's most distinguishing characteristics—particularly in his later works. Truggin is the sexton in *Kindness in a Corner*:

"They silly folk," said Truggin, "who do talk of the raising of the dead, be the great doubters. They do not know God. Who would wish to give another tongue to a woman, and another greedy belly to a man, when once they be come here? Who are we to say that a little dead dust bain't as knowing—and more than as knowing—as a living man?"

"Cannot He who made all the earth, wi' maidens to dance in 'en, make a little dust joyful too? And what be joy?" asked Truggin, sitting down upon the steps of the grave. "Bain't joy only ease and comfort, a rest from our toil? What sense would there be in making a poor bone work again? We do know 'twould be easy for God to raise all up, but they two hands of His would be better employed in keeping all down."

But there are times when Powys' ironic touch is less mordant and more genial, even when religious matters are involved. An excellent example of what may be termed "playful irony" is to be found in *Innocent Birds*: The Reverend Mr. Tucker is described as a man who has a secret, and that secret is a book which Mr. Tucker reads only "in the quiet of the fields, or with

the door safely locked, in his study at Dodderdown." But once it happens that Susy, the church cleaner, surprises Mr. Tucker reading his book before service, and judging from his exclamations at the time, Susy decides that "'tis a naughty story 'e do look at." The rumor spreads—being strengthened by stray bits of evidence—that the parson has a passion for bawdy stories. Indeed, his own exclamations leave no doubt in the reader's mind that it is, as Mrs. Chick says, "a book of wickedness" that he carries about in his pocket. And throughout the novel the suspense is sustained. In the end, however, Miss Pettifer—who believes that a reformation is needed in Madder—comes upon the sinful book which Mr. Tucker has inadvertently dropped in the road beside her gate:

Miss Pettifer opened the book eagerly, intending to enjoy herself at least for that morning, and then to forward the book to the bishop to show him what wicked stories his clergy read.

Miss Pettifer opened the book at the last page, and before she could stop herself doing so, she read these words:

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

Miss Pettifer rose hastily and threw Mr. Tucker's story-book into the fire.

Closely related to Powys' masterly power of ironic expression—which has been shown to be both bitter and playful—is another important aspect of his genius which, for want of a better word, may be called simply subtlety. By using the simplest language, and the most concentrated phraseology, he produces an atmosphere of innocence and naïveté which contrasts strangely with the wise and sophisticated outlook upon human perversities as revealed in the narratives themselves. It is just this facility for clothing a twentieth century sophistication in language as simple as the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible that makes T. F. Powys so extremely subtle. Indeed, judging from style alone, one might readily mistake him for a seventeenth century divine—contemporary with Jeremy Taylor and John Bunyan; but after examining the content of his stories—with their numerous examples of exhibitionism, nympholepsy, sadism, and masochism—one realizes at once that he belongs to the age of Sigmund Freud. Two examples, selected at random, will serve to illustrate this

subtlety which is so easy to recognize and yet so difficult to explain:

All the children were afraid of Mad Button. They would run this way and that when they saw him coming, but the big girls would run slower than the others, so that they were sometimes caught.

And elsewhere:

When Fanny reached the other end of the field, as far as possible from the village, she hid behind a shock of wheat and Tom would have run past her only she laughed as he went by.

Notice that all the words which appear in these two passages are employed in every-day use. And notice, too, that the great majority of them are words of one syllable. Offhand, one might say that the passages could have been written, with little difficulty, by a normally intelligent child of ten. Only when one imagines their being read by a child of ten is the reader brought to realize the shrewdness of the author. In short, there is more to his stories than the lines themselves reveal—the reader must expect to find a goodly portion of the narrative written as it were between them.

In closing, a word more about his style. However much his subtlety, his irony, and his control over what may be described as realistic-symbolism, may have matured in the later novels and short stories, it is not to be gainsaid that T. F. Powys, from the very start of his literary career, has been an accomplished master of English prose. If such early works as *Hester Dominy*, or *Mr. Tasker's Gods*, or even *The Left Leg*, seem disappointing and noticeably lacking in Powysian color, the reason is not that they were handicapped by weak prose construction. To be sure, the dialect which is so large an element in this novelist's art was used sparingly and with less facility in the first few stories, but considering the difficulty of the Dorsetshire peasant's speech this was only to be expected. The actual prose, however, has always been of sustained excellence. The following passage from *Hester Dominy*, describing the movement of aged feet along a country road, might well appear in the very latest of his novels without in any way disrupting the even tempo of the more experienced style:

The human feet shuffle on, the feet of the two old women who are walking in the road. A thin dreary rain that wets the mud and moistens the heaps of dirt by the road-sides, and falls, drip, drip, from the trees—tells tales of the summer, does it? No, I hardly think so!

The clothes of the two women are of a drab colour, and match very prettily the heaps of mud by the roadside. It is said that in the vast space of ether there are dead worlds that move like black ghosts in the firmament, untouched by the power of creation, touched only by space itself. Of such dead matter are our old women who walk in the road. But are they really dead? Near to these dark human worlds of ours another world has come dangerously near—too near—a world that may set alight these dark universes.

But they walk still in dead earnest, they walk in the middle of the road, their feet shuffle. Are they the last human creatures making the last human sound?

Always the same simple language: the same short, common words, and the same terse phraseology. And while it is not the kind of style one would expect of a man whose thought betrays such ultra-sophistication, nevertheless it has much in common with the author's life itself. There is much in Powys' manner of simple construction—though little in the actual processes of his mind—which suggests the lonely, unworldly life that he is known to lead in the English countryside. As Mr. Hunter has remarked: "He is of the generation and yet not of it. His novels are only possible because he has cut himself off from the twentieth-century civilization, and yet could have been written in no other century but this." Perhaps this basic contradiction in Powys has had much to do with his being so frequently misunderstood. Despite the fact that he has written about what appear on the surface to be very simple people, and despite his numerous references to such quaint and child-like souls as Jeremy Taylor, Thomas Fuller, or John Bunyan, it is yet difficult to believe that the creator of such fantastic monsters as Charlie Tulk and Farmer Mew can honestly and boldly declare, as he does in his *Soliloquies of a Hermit*, that two of his greatest pleasures in life are digging in his little garden, and mending his broken fence-posts with pieces of string.

No novelist even in this Freudian era has made freer use of sex in his stories than has he. And yet one may rest assured that—to borrow the famous words of Bunyan—If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged by the neck till they be dead, Theodore Francis Powys would still be alive and well!

by Matthew Urban

## BACHELOR JOCOSERIA

"A collection of things gravish and gayish—hence the title  
*Jocoseria*—which is Batavian Latin, I think."  
—Robert Browning, *Letter to Dr. Furnivall.*

"... These my unbaptizèd Rhimes  
Writ in my wild unhallowed Times."  
—Robert Herrick, *His Prayer for Absolution.*

"A suivre les leçons de ta philosophie,  
A mépriser la mort en savourant la vie."  
—Voltaire, *A Horace.*

"The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none, I think, do there embrace."  
—Andrew Marvell, *To His Coy Mistress.*

### INVOCATION

O Muse who gave this gift of song,  
Forgive me if I do it wrong  
In making with it holiday  
Against the world's more sober way.  
Grant me for this at least your ruth:  
With nonsense sing I yet some truth.  
Though I present no counter-creed,  
The world and I are not agreed.  
Yet, World, it is not you I mean,  
Rather the shut-eyed Philistine  
Who does not know, who cannot see,  
Yet lords it over you and me.  
Let's budge him to a better bent  
With this brief moment's merriment.  
Once more, O Muse, your pardon give  
And let what lines are likely live.

## FIRST LOVE

How can man know his first the dearest She?  
There's no superlative in less than three.

## MONOGAMY

Oh, pretty girls a-plenty  
From which to choose a wife,  
But how can five-and-twenty  
Pick *one* of them *for life*?

## ON CELESTIAL HAPPINESS

The gods, the very gods who live above,  
Do they know all, or nothing, of this thing called Love?

## TO THE PRESENT ONE

Oh, beautiful you were and are,  
When I am near, when I am far;  
To my remembering sight arise  
First of all earthly ones, your eyes . . .  
No doubt a kindly future stores  
Some other pairs as nice as yours.

## AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH

When May was yielding unto June she came  
And left me with her loveliness aflame;  
Now flames to embers, embers to ashes cool,  
I wonder, was I chivalrous or fool?

*Envoy:* Came next May, she had her try  
With wiser lad less good than I.

## BACHELOR JOCOSERIA

## GENUS HUMANUM

In all this pageant round about,  
 Where some are thin and some are stout,  
 Some will receive and some will give,  
 And some will merely, merely live,  
 Some will rise, and some will fall,  
 And some will never live at all.

## SALAD DAYS

When first a nude has ended all our guessing  
 We thank the artist who invented dressing.  
 Later, this raw opinion reviewing,  
 We grant that God knew well what he was doing.

## LONGFELLOW GUEDALLIES WITH INFIDELITY

Wives of great men all remind us  
 We can make their lives sublime,  
 (And departing leave behind us  
 Foot-notes on the shelves of time.)

## THE SCHOLAR PRAYS

From realms of book and pen,  
 Oh, lead me back again  
 To love and life and men!  
 (And—lest that last line sound "late Roman,"—  
*Man*, let me say, means really *woman*.)

## MEA LESBIA—MODEL 1934

Men die for lack of that which women yearn to give.  
 Come, let us love, and live.

## CONSTANCY

"Kisses? And what are they, good Sir,  
When they come not from her, from her?"  
"O splendid lad, your critics lied,  
And youth is good . . . But have you tried?"

## NOT QUITE WORDSWORTH

. . . Pleased if some souls (for such there needs must be)  
Who have felt the weight of long virginity  
Should find brief solace here, as I have found.

## REVERY

Some kiss with pleasure, some with pain,  
But lips return again.  
First of my dreams, O pretty misses,  
The sweet abandon of your kisses.

## PERSPECTIVE

When I was young, I was an upright lad  
And loved the good, and truth;  
But now that I am old and rather bad  
I rue my misspent youth.

## DEFINITION

"What is a liaison?" you ask?  
A military term, or martial—  
A military marriage, like as not . . .  
Oh, rot!

## FATHER GANDER

As I was going to St. Ives,  
I met a man with seven wives . . .  
Had he been stronger  
My tale had been longer.

## RECESS

Take not, my friends, this verse too much to heart.  
 Enjoy it if you can.  
 While the world wags its wiser way apart,  
 A moment's respite for the Puritan.

## WOMAN'S ETERNAL TRAGEDY

Hear, Woman, what your case must be,  
 In either plight star-crossed:  
 A woman never won, no woman she;  
 A woman won, a woman lost.  
 Add this, your crowning misery:  
 A woman won, a *man and* woman lost.

## DENDROLOGY

Poems are made by fools like me,  
 While wiser lads go on a spree.

## SECOND HAND

Young man, will you take my pearls to heart?  
 No, you must live them too.  
 Your way may well be wiser than my art.  
 Hooray for you!

## EMBARRAS DE—RICHESSES?

Poor men and women, whom the great gods vex,  
 Given for grief or guerdon, soul and sex.

## ON A MODERN WEDDING

For such hypocrisy and stuffy feasts  
 Give me the clean sincerity of beasts.

## FIVE LIVES

Mabel married and of course  
Had a divorce.  
Dolores dramatized her "fall",  
Got talked of but no love at all.  
Bella's astonishing assiduity  
Could not succeed at promiscuity.  
Portia when old and somewhat stout  
Died wondering what 'twas all about.  
Felicia held the middle way,  
Had fun and never had to pay.

## WISE LYRIC

Spring!  
A recurrent thing?  
How many more have you, my friend,  
Before the end?  
Then sing!

## LOVELY APPARITION

She was a phantom of delight  
When first she gleamed upon my sight.  
'Too bad she would not be content  
To be my moment's ornament.

## REMORSE?

How very much am I to blame  
Who made her wild young spirit tame,  
Subduing to my long embrace  
The tender whiteness of her face  
And holding all her thousand charms  
Within the compass of my arms . . .

Come, dry those crocodilian eyes,  
Have done with ululation.  
Would she have had it otherwise?  
She liked your "admiration."

**"BUT E'EN A WOMAN"—INVARIUM ET IMMUTABILE**

Soon is her infinite variety undone:  
Passion makes Royal Egypt and the milk-maid one.

**BREATHING-SPACE**

Both young and old are slaves, immutably:  
The young, to ignorance and passion's breath;  
The old, to habit and the fear of death.  
Only the middle-aged are free,  
And they but momentarily,  
In relativity.

**PRETENSE**

Over this wickedness that is not I  
The goodly-godly soon will have their say  
With shocked expression or self-righteous sigh  
In name of godliness that is not they.

**SAMARCAND**

Be not deceived, though Cynicism dance!  
We tarry at the Inn of Dalliance  
Where we our Weary Bodies may refresh  
To make the Golden Journey toward Romance.

**VALUES**

Though I have many friends, and I would have  
Their approbation for my tiny chatter,  
Something more deep within me does not crave  
Their blessing but insists, What does it matter?

## FIRST AID TO CRITICS

I have been Beauty's guest,  
Of verse and of woman's face;  
I neither would disgrace;  
Is there beauty of Truth-in-Jest?

## DREAM-GIRL

No compromise with that Romance  
Which is not Chance,  
The Final Consummation,  
The Fuller Revelation.  
But since the lady is not here,  
Waiter, a glass of beer!

## BACHELOR'S END

From all I see and know apart,  
Locked in some hollow of my heart,  
A ghostly maiden face  
Of a more than earthly grace  
Shall rise and overspread  
Some merely mortal head  
Futurity enwraps,  
And I shall wed,  
Perhaps.

by Merritt Y. Hughes

## ZEITGEIST AND STYLE

AN APOLOGY FOR HEINRICH WÖLFFLIN AGAINST MARTIN SCHUTZE

FEW writers on aesthetics have suffered more from their disciples than Heinrich Wölfflin. The fathering of the unities of time and place upon Aristotle was hardly a more violent inference upon the *Poetics* than is that made upon *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* by the interpreters of German romantic literature who find in Wölfflin's five-fold antithesis between the renaissance and the baroque styles categories which they use to illuminate the mystery of style in all the arts in all periods. Wölfflin has become the Messiah, or at least the John the Baptist, of an aesthetic church which is already rich in apostles, doctors and heretics who range as far as the revolt which flames in Mr. Martin Schütze's recent book on *Academic Illusions*.

It should be said at once that the extension of Wölfflin's categories to the study of literature beyond the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is of no immediate interest here. Their application to literature generally is quite a different matter from their application to that literature which was contemporaneous with the painting, sculpture and architecture which Wölfflin has made it his life-long business to describe. It is possible to find his method fruitful in the interpretation of German lyric poetry of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, or of Shakespeare's plays, and at the same time to concur most heartily with Mr. Schütze when—after a ferocious arraignment of the "haggard withdrawal from life" and of the "unvital flight into fantasmagorias and supermundane experience" of German Romanticism in its callow days—he cries, "There is no real homology between the romantic and the baroque".<sup>1</sup> The question which really presses, however, is whether

<sup>1</sup>Martin Schütze *Academic Illusions*, page 232. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933.

there is any common denominator between sculpture, painting and architecture in those centuries on the one hand and literature on the other.

Mr. Schütze denies not only that Wölfflin's categories apply to that literature but also that they are a valid characterization of the arts to which their inventor has dedicated himself. Mr. Schütze may have devoted himself sufficiently to the contemplation of those arts to speak without presumption when he challenges Wölfflin on his own ground. To one who has spent only two years in Italy with interest in the painting and sculpture of three and four hundred years ago as a vital coadjutor of his literary research Mr. Schütze seems to speak with strange assurance *ex cathedra* when he says, "The term 'baroque' is applicable to the great art of the seventeenth century only if it is understood explicitly not as a term of artistic definition, but solely [as one] of matter-of-fact reference to a period of history. If, however," he continues, "the baroque" is "defined as an absolute poetic-artistic style representing the opposite of another style, named the 'classic' and defined absolutistically also, it should be limited to the blatant, insincere or incompetent work of that age which failed of classic unity and integrality of composition."

## II.

Perhaps it may be assumed that, as far as they go, Wölfflin's categories do describe the two successive styles with which he deals in the three arts in which he is exclusively interested. At least, we may concede the modest claim which he makes for them in recognizing their limitation. In a passage in *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* which has been made familiar by Oskar Walzel's repeated references to it<sup>2</sup>, Wölfflin frankly faces the question whether any two types such as his 'renaissance' or 'classic' style in contrast with the 'baroque' are an adequate representation of the historical process. His five-fold categories do not pretend to be in any sense Kantian. His only reason for regarding them as exhaustive, he professes, is his inability, after more than forty years of study, to find others. He even admits that, "Obgleich sie offenbar eine

<sup>2</sup> *Academic Illusions*, page 230.

<sup>3</sup> *Wechselseitige Erhellung der Kunst*, pages 63-64.

gleichlautende Tendenz haben, sind sie doch nicht aus einem Prinzip abgeleitet."<sup>4</sup> At heart, of course, Wölfflin believes in the basic unity of his five categories and he reveals his real feeling about them in his chapter on the fourth of them; the contrast between the structural multiplicity (*Fielheit*) of the painting, sculpture and architecture of the sixteenth century and the unity (*Einheit*) into which those arts integrated their multiplicity as the century drew to a close. All three of the preceding categories, he says in a casual digression, anticipate this one and the unity of the baroque is a final aspect of the "*atektonische Geschmack*" which "*lässt das starre Gefüge geometrischer Verhältnisse in Fließende auf*"<sup>5</sup> The consistency of his five categories springs from a sound, inductive process. They are descriptive instruments. Their final test, as Walzel observes, is their usefulness to students who are trying to understand concrete, artistic phenomena.

It was simply the unusual success with which Wölfflin described the art of the Renaissance in Italy, Germany and the Low Countries which led to the translation of the work by which he is best known to English-speaking readers; *The Art of the Italian Renaissance*. It is no mere theorist's sensitivity that he displays to every aspect of the arts with which he deals and to all their ramifying relations within their own realm of being and outside of that realm in the world of thought and action. The generalizations in the final chapters on "the new vision" and "the new beauty" present, it is true, an original theory, but they come spontaneously from the preceding survey of material and they are so illuminating and impartial that the book is still indispensable to serious students of the culture of the periods. No investigator of Renaissance art who attempts to interpret it theoretically distorts the evidence as little as Wölfflin does. In this respect the contrast is entirely in his favor, if his work be compared with that which has recently been issued by the Oxford Press for our most distinguished American writer in that field.

In the book for which he has become most famous in Germany, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Wölfflin's elaboration of his

<sup>4</sup>*Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, London, 1932, page 244.

<sup>5</sup>*Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, page 171.

five-fold categories is not quite clear of the charge of selecting its examples to fit its theory. The great interest of that book is not, however, the adequacy of its categories to exhaust the basic distinctions between renaissance and baroque art, but rather its implication of the doctrine which Walzel has elaborated in *Wechselseitige Erhellung der Kunste*. Wölfflin's purpose is not only to show that his categories distinguish the tastes of the two periods, but also to show that they apply equally to the three allied arts of painting, sculpture and architecture. If any community can be proved among the principles governing the development of style among three arts even as nearly related as those which he treats, Walzel holds that the extension of those principles, in some significant degree, to still other arts and specifically to literature is possible. No one can doubt his sincerity when he says that Wölfflin brought him a positive illumination (*Erhellung*). In spite of his sincerity, one may doubt Walzel's judgment when he tries to apply two of the categories (*Lineare vs Malerische* and *opene vs geschlossene Form*) to Shakespeare's plays, and to exhibit that drama by the structure of its acts and scenes as baroque in precisely the same sense that the painting of Rembrandt and Rubens is baroque.

The question whether it is possible to use the principles of one art in analysis of the style of another is not settled in the negative even though Walzel's attempt in Shakespeare's case, and all other similar attempts, end in failure. The fact that such attempts are made is itself a stubborn one. Little though our sympathy with them may be, and sternly though we may condemn them as mere dilettantism, it is hard not to cast a longing glance sometimes toward that Northwest Passage. If we commit ourselves too absolutely to the belief that the materials and the objects and the origins and the social entanglements of the arts are too widely distinct for them to display any essential, common stylistic principles, when they are scrutinized strictly as pure decoration, we are likely to find our craving for an ultimate common ground among them too strong for us. One of our British colleagues, who professes no interest in Wölfflin's theories, has more than once confessed to me that he has long been in the habit of associating a specific shade of green with English renaissance culture and a Tyrian purple with the culture which immediately

succeeded. He is annoyed with himself for this involuntary symbolism and cannot explain why he has indulged it from the time when he first began to read for Honors in the university. If only he could bring himself to agree with any of the views of ancient historians as to what Tyrian dye really was, he tells his friends that he might be weak enough to launch a new theory about the development of the inscrutable soul of Orlando. Since he was once a good Paterian, he is a little troubled also because his renaissance color symbolism does not ever assume the semblance of a hard, gem-like flame.

Heinrich Wölfflin has undertaken to do rationally what this man does in spite of himself irrationally. He has tried to characterize two historical periods in terms of fundamental contrasts which are demonstrably the same in the styles of three arts. Because he is not in the least an intellectual imperialist, he says nothing about the other arts; but he must be conscious of having left the door ajar for Strich and Walzel to use his theories to interpret two other arts; the lyric and the drama. Where Strich led the way by applying the five categories to the lyric of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was inevitable perhaps that others should follow by extending them to the literature of modern times and of all time.

The categories are in the form of antitheses. The first of them contrasts the plasticity of renaissance paintings and their use of sharp outlines with the devaluation of the line by the baroque. The third, which has played much the greatest part in literary criticism, contrasts the 'closed' grouping of renaissance figures in simple, geometrical patterns on a rather prominent vertical or horizontal axis with the transcendence of such simple outlining by the baroque in quest of subtler laws of form which would convey the suggestion of movement that was a part of the new vision of both beauty and reality. The antitheses are so broad and their five-fold aspect is so fully developed that their scope is dangerously sweeping. It is here that Mr. Schütze finds the vulnerable point for his attack. For him there can be no compromise between giving an absolute value to Wölfflin's categories and denying them all value even as a contribution to a definite historical problem. Either, he would have us think, they must be rejected as an account of the three allied arts in the fifteenth and sixteenth cen-

turies to which Wölfflin applies them, or they must be accepted in an absolute and universal way.

No mode of attack upon Wölfflin could be more unjust than this. Its only excuse is the fact that it tries to reach the disciples through the master. Wölfflin's great merit as an historian is this; while he has recognized the description of phenomena as his main business, he has acknowledged their explanation as one of its aspects. Ultimate and final explanation has not tempted him, but some generalization about the development of style (*stilentwicklung*)<sup>\*</sup> has seemed to him indispensable. Yet he has stopped there and it is likely that he might regard any attempt to give an absolute value to any categories which he, or any other historian, had invented to distinguish any two successive periods by stylistic means as robbing them of their specific, historical significance. It may have been a proper respect for his attitude which led Strich, when he applied his categories to the German renaissance and baroque lyric, to avoid all mention of Wölfflin's name and all direct reference to his work.

Wölfflin has a right to expect his categories to be judged by their adequacy to the problem for which he invented them. Any denial that he has contributed to the solution of that problem is tantamount to denying that there is a problem to solve. If there is no problem—if the best and most representative art of one period cannot be distinguished from that of another on stylistic grounds, as distinct from those of subject-matter, social and political implication and other extraneous matters—it follows, of course, that Wölfflin's conception of his task is mistaken. So Mr. Schütze seems to regard it when he insists that Rembrandt and Rubens, "like the great masters of the Italian renaissance and of the Greek classic age, reveal no alien elements of intention or composition, or of thought-forms or shape-forms. They are classic in precisely the same sense that their renaissance and Greek predecessors are. The attribute 'baroque' is attributable to them only if it is defined not as the opposite, but as one of the forms of the 'classic'".

<sup>\*</sup>*Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, page 9.

<sup>†</sup>*Academic Illusions*, pages 194-5.

## III.

Among Wölfflin's lay admirers, interest in his work springs usually from the conviction carried by his attempt to validate the best and most representative painting of the seventeenth century as both first-rate or 'classic' and yet distinct generically from the painting of the preceding period. What may be called the popular view of the baroque begs the question of its value by regarding it, as Mr. Schütze does, as a welter of vulgarity transcended by a few great artists. The *taste* of the period is felt simply as decadent. The Renaissance is seen, in the words of a modern Dutch mystic whose mysticism rests entirely upon this misconception, as "disintegrating in wild lust and gluttony of the senses."<sup>8</sup> In the same way Mr. Schütze traces the opulent limbs of the nymphs and *putti* of the seventeenth century to a degenerate social milieu, the study of which he relegates to the 'factualists'. Its cyclopaean taste in architecture seems to him to arise from "the excessive desire for external majesty characteristic of the monarchistic-imperialistic psyche."<sup>9</sup> Great art ought obviously to transcend the yearnings of that psyche and Mr. Schütze falls into the absurdity of claiming complete transcendence of it for the greatest baroque artists. To a mere factualist who has a hankering to understand the representative art of any period through stylistic categories which are no less applicable within their proper limits than are the extra-artistic categories which he patiently documents by his study of language and history, Mr. Schütze seems to be rather hysterically attacking Wölfflin for his recognition that nothing concerns the historian of the arts more vitally than the relation of style to period.

Wölfflin's categories, on the other hand, are an honest effort to meet the problem. The seal of their sincerity is their independence of the popular misconception of the baroque as decadent, and their superiority to the attitudinizing overvalue for that style in which some of its recent champions indulge. The basis of Wölfflin's conception of it appears best in the book which he wrote over forty-five years ago; *Renaissance und Barock*. There he ends a discussion of Michelangelo's later manner by observing

<sup>8</sup>Dirk Coster in *The Living and the Lifeless*, page 12.

<sup>9</sup>Academic Illusions, page 229.

that his earnestness was beginning contemporaneously to extend to the other arts and to life in every aspect; that it was paralleled in literature by Tasso's choice of a world-forsaking hero for the *Gerusalemme liberata*, and in social intercourse by a more self-conscious bearing which stemmed from a new estimate set upon man and a new craving for the "great and significant in art".<sup>20</sup> No reader of Italian philosophical literature in the latter part of the sixteenth century can miss the revolutionary sense of man's almost divine splendor which pervades every page. Giovanni Gentile rightly makes that principle one of the poles of his study of *Giordano Bruno e il pensiero del rinascimento*. The factor is too little considered in the study of baroque art. It might easily be overstressed, but Wölfflin's recognition of it as a factor in the development of the baroque will bear scrutiny. He has not insisted upon it. To do so would not accord with the exclusive concern for the development of decorative style which has occupied him in his later work; but, none the less, his remark with reference to Michelangelo indicates what has been an unchanging point-of-view with him. He began his work with the immense initial advantage of knowing that the great examples of baroque art were not great in spite of an essentially vulgar spiritual background, but sprang from a revolutionary change in the conception of both the beautiful and the actual—sprang, that is to say, from a mutation of the vision with which men looked at life.

Yet Wölfflin has shown no tendency to make ultimate generalizations about the *Renaissancemensch* and the *Barockmensch*. His books give the impression that his knowledge of the literature of his periods is very much wider than his use of it and that he deliberately abstains from making many literary comparisons. He contents himself in the earlier book with passing references to Castiglione's taste in dancing fashions and to Sannazaro's taste in saintly fashions, as exemplified in the *De partu Virginis*. In his later work he surprisingly neglects the support for his theory which might be drawn from the critical writings of the sixteenth century, beginning when Varchi's influence made the phrase, *ut pictura poesis*, "almost the key-note of Renaissance criticism".<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Renaissance und Barock*, page 69.

<sup>21</sup> J. E. Spingarn, *Renaissance Criticism*, page 42.

The force of his significance for students of the history of literature may consist not in the direct applicability of his categories to their subject, but in the fact that literature had more in common with painting and sculpture in the periods which he has investigated than they have today. Walzel points out that painting and sculpture had more in common then than now and admits that the cogency of Wölfflin's demonstration of common principles in their *stilentwicklung* is partly dependent upon that fact.

Insofar, then, as poetry actually shared the nature of painting, Wölfflin's study of that art is significant for contemporary development. Quite apart from the reference of his categories in specific detail to literature, his effort to go below them to the underlying human moods must command respect. For example, he lays stress upon the value set upon passion of any kind in renaissance art and its relation to the peculiar style of the period. His statement of the case might gain, if he had been able to make use of some revealing passage like that in Sir Thomas Elyot's *Boke of the Goverour* where he wrote: "And he that is perfectly instructed in portrayture and hapneth to rede any noble and excellent historie, whereby his courage is enflamed to imitation of vertue, he forth with taketh his penne or pensill, and with a grave and substanciall studie, gatherynge to him all the partes of imagination, endeavoureth him selfe to expresse lively, and (as I mought say) actually, in portrayture, not only the faict or affaire, but also the sondry affections of every personage in the historie recited, which mought in any wise appiere or be perceived in their visage, countenance or gesture."<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, Elyot's passage is fully intelligible to a student of literature only if he has grasp enough upon the art of the times to follow Wölfflin in his discussion of the peculiar fondness of renaissance painters for the dramatization of passion and of its relation to the style in which sharply defined, sculptural figures were motifs.

## IV.

There is one other point where the critical theory of the Renaissance might lend support to Wölfflin's principles and where it, in turn, might be made more intelligible for us by his work.

<sup>13</sup>*The Boke of the Goverour*, Everyman, page 30.

It is the obvious relation of that theory to his contrast between the painting in which geometrical organization obtained and that in which it yielded to more open forms. His task has been to illuminate the gradual development beginning early in the sixteenth century away from the conception of beauty as "approximating to a certain mechanical or geometrical form, such as roundness, squareness, or straightness,"<sup>23</sup> to a conception of beauty in terms of something more inward, which is usually attributed to the influence of Neo-Platonism. Here the value of his discussion is the light which it throws upon the peculiar 'realism' which is so difficult for us to understand in contemporary references to baroque pictures. He makes it clear why Spenser, referring by a classical name to the baroque painting which he admired, praised the "life-resembling pencil" of Zeuxis, and why, in his own words, "the greatest of idealists, Michelangelo, was also the greatest of realists."<sup>24</sup> Only those who understand the true inwardness of this sense of reality which became even stronger as the revolution from renaissance to baroque styles proceeded, can enter into the effects of movement and of surface-life which Wölfflin traces in the later painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Here we are on the verge of a controversial matter, discussion of which would plunge us into the wider application of Wölfflin's theories by his disciples: the question of the relation of the baroque vision of beauty to the aesthetic of Plotinus. In *Vom Geistesleben alter und neuer Zeit* and elsewhere, Oskar Walzel has laid stress upon the influence of Plotinus at this time as well as in the eighteenth century. The Plotinian aesthetic has seemed to him vital for appreciation both of baroque poetry and of the art of Goethe's lyric. He has also found it suggestive in his own personal doctrine of the rôles of *Erlebnis* and *Gestalt* in *Gehalt und Gestalt im Kunstwerk des Dichters*. As far as the development from renaissance to baroque style is concerned, we may be sure that Wölfflin's observation upon Plotinus would be, that his influence was less a force than a significant coincidence. He might perhaps add that baroque taste found corroboration in the *Enneads* because their authority was just the support that thinking men needed for their sense of the new beauty as one with utter reality.

<sup>23</sup>J. E. Spingarn, *Renaissance Criticism*, page 32.

<sup>24</sup>*The Art of the Italian Renaissance*, page 223.

by John W. Dodds

## THE SANITY OF CHARLES LAMB

CHARLES LAMB has been revived—if one who gives perennial pleasure to so many may be said ever to need revival—in a comprehensive anthology that has a real excuse for being.<sup>1</sup> Its true distinction lies in the illustrations of E. H. Shepard. So well does this artist capture the old-world flavor, the quaint geniality, the sly fun of Elia that one is inclined to wish that no one else ever be permitted to illustrate Lamb. Here is *amicus redivivus*, indeed. The book itself attempts to lend a degree of autobiographical unity to Lamb's work by including not only the best of Elia but selections from the letters generous enough to throw light both on the essays and their author. A skilful editing which turns from the essays, so often the best of letters, to the letters, so frequently the germ of the essays, gives a well-knit continuity to the whole. A. C. Ward contributes an excellent introduction, in which he speaks truly of Lamb's "robust masculinity" and his "hard core of common-sense." The point is one that is worth pursuing a little further, in this centennial year.

Just a hundred years ago Lamb, so much "in love with this green earth," smoked his last pipe, breathed his ultimate pun, and found opportunity, at last, to see if "ghosts can laugh, or shake their gaunt sides when one is pleasant with them." The century since has been wonderfully gentle with his reputation. Fluctuations in popularity which normally beset the literary market have passed him by; steadily he has laid hold of the affections of new generations, and today it seems inconceivable that he will not go on for ever. Even the amiable weaknesses unveiled so genially

<sup>1</sup>*Everybody's Lamb*, edited by A. C. Ward and illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1933. \$3.75.

in his essays endear him to those readers who cherish, in their authors, friendliness as well as intellect, and a warm humanity as well as a sober profundity. In him they find no abridgment of a man, but one with reach of perception and sympathy, friendly and kind and true.

Yet Lamb has not always had full justice from the friends most eager to praise him. There has always persisted an idea of the "gentle" Elia, courageous under a burden well-nigh insupportable, a little odd and strange in ordinary society, sweet and quaint and whimsical, but in his essays embroidering, in an antique manner, the fringes of life. And so there emerges Coleridge's "gentle-hearted Charles" and Thackeray's "Saint Charles"—a saint wearing his crown lightly enough, but still a little delicate, as perhaps a saint should be. In a measure all this is true; but it is less than true, for such a portrait does not show us the substance beneath the charm. We do not know Lamb or his writings if we fail to distinguish between matter and manner, or to see behind the reminiscent warmth and curious fancy of the essays the robustness and common-sense which inform them—the sanity which gives them penetration and power. In defending "the sanity of true genius" Lamb mentions that "hidden sanity which still guides the poet in his wildest seeming-aberrations." Humblest of men, he was of course not thinking of himself. But of that hidden sanity he too had God's plenty, and we must know that to understand him:

In his judgments of people, for instance, there is a soundness, an instinctive rightness of tact, with just enough prejudice to give his opinions savour. To be sure, he has imperfect sympathies with the Scotch, but one doubts if he ever hated a *Scotchman*, any more than Samuel Johnson did. We smile with him at the "pensive gentility" of old Samuel Salt, the eccentricity of George Dyer, and the militant single-mindedness of Mrs. Battle. At the same time we know that he likes these quaint persons and such is his persuasive sympathy that even as we smile we feel our affections engaged. With a phrase, Lamb could reach the quintessence of a personality. When he calls Coleridge "an archangel, a little damaged" and says that "he had a hunger for eternity", he tells us what Pater took a whole essay to say. His opinions of men could be generous, too, in circumstances most

trying. Southey had attacked Elia in the *Quarterly* on the score of infidelity, and Lamb writes to Barton: "He might have spared an old friend such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion . . . But I love and respect Southey, and will not retort." Lamb knew men, and knowing them, could love them.

The rightness of judgment with which Lamb was so deeply impregnated finds its best illustration, perhaps, in his critical papers and in the casual flashes of comment that he throws out in his letters. Hazlitt knew the man and when he says that his writing has "a marrowy vein both in thought and feeling" he penetrates beyond graces of style to the *matter* of Lamb's thinking. Lamb was not omniscient, but where his tastes led him—back to the Elizabethans and the old seventeenth century prose writers, Bunyan, Walton, Taylor, Browne, Fuller—his discrimination and his insight were amazingly right. With an eloquent homeliness, too, he touched the weakness as well as the strength of the great contemporaries who were his friends. So he writes to Wordsworth of the latter's *Beggar*: "The instructions conveyed in it are too direct, and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter." And again, "I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his *Ancient Marinere*, *A Poet's Reverie*; it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a lion, but only the scenical representation of a lion." Whether Lamb makes frolic mirth with Wordsworth's sobrieties or resurrests one of Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors* that he may lay it more gently in its grave; he arrives, with a deceptive ease, at the heart of the matter.

Lamb's literary criticism owes much of its power to its immediacy. His gift for analysis springs from his intuitions; his approach is always intensely personal, and his judgments come from a sensitive and cultivated mind subjecting itself to a specific work of art. One need never seek in him a discussion of first principles. Of facts, arguments, theories, he has none. So it is that he avoids the pits of literary metaphysic into which Coleridge sometimes falls, just as he escapes, in another way, Hazlitt's political bias. Always he clings to the real, the concrete, that which comes home to men's business and bosoms. Modestly, informally, he thinks his way into Richardson or Browne or Webster, and

from the meanings he finds in the small things that we have overlooked he gives new point to the old. What better could be said of Don Quixote than to call him "the errant star of knighthood, made more tender by eclipse"? Or of Shakespeare: "He makes us believe, while we are among his lovely creations, that they are nothing but what we are familiar with, as in dreams new things seem old; but we awake, and sigh for the difference." He gives us creative criticism of the highest order, "felt along the blood", becoming at last a criticism of the terms of our common humanity.

No one delighted in the old writers more than Lamb, but he searched them not so much for their quaintness or prettiness as for the freshness and vitality of their apprehension of life. His genius for getting at the heart of things and for penetrating beyond the peripheries of thought and adornments of style is nowhere better shown than in the brief critical comments prefaced to his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*. That which attracted him in Dekker, Ford, Webster, Jonson, and the others was "not so much passages of wit and humor, though the old plays are rich in such, as scenes of passion, sometimes of the deepest quality . . . The plays I made choice of were, with few exceptions, such as treat of human life and manners, rather than masques and Arcadian pastorals, with their train of abstractions, unimpassioned deities, passionate mortals." Here again he is concerned with the immediate stuff of life, with passions, contending duties, loves, and enmities, with how the Elizabethans thought and what they felt. He saw clearly the gap between the insipid morality of the contemporary stage and the high passions of the old plays. "A puritanical obtuseness of sentiment," he cries out, "a stupid infantile goodness, is creeping amongst us, instead of the vigorous passions, and virtues clad in flesh and blood, with which the old dramatists present us." Lamb was trying to get at the realities of life and art; he wants his drama to deal deeply with matters of profound import. With a penetration as brilliant as it is sane and quiet he leads us into the mystery of things as if he were God's spy, and shows us that which before we were too dull to see.

Lamb loved a paradox as he loved old wine and old books, and much of his subtlest criticism is delivered in this form. He delights in first announcing a critical heresy and then in leading us gently to the truth that lies behind the seeming contradiction. He

declares that "the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage than those of almost any other dramatist whatever." Hardly have we recovered from the first shock of this before we find ourselves in agreement as he shows us how much of Shakespeare can be given extension and vesture only in the imagination, and is either incapable of being presented on the stage or becomes quite another thing when so presented. A strait-lacing actuality, he says, cramps and presses down the free conception of the mind. How can the witches of *Macbeth*—so many old women, on the stage—give us the thrill of horror that we feel as we read about them? Those who watch an actor impersonating Othello see no more of the texture of Othello's mind, "its heroic confidences and its human misgivings" than the spectators who pay their pennies to look through the man's telescope in Leicester Fields see "the inward plot and topography of the moon." This brings him to his famous passage on *King Lear*, in which he maintains that the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. "The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear . . . The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual." Suddenly we understand why the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies is played so infrequently today. Behind Lamb's paradox there lies the weight of truth realized in the imagination.

Again, in his essay *On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century*, Lamb holds that the comedies of Congreve and Wycherley are obnoxious to present-day taste because they are taken too seriously. These characters are not transcripts of life at all. They live in an artificial world of suspended moral responsibility, a world unmoral, where the Fainalls and Mirabels and Dorimonts do not offend the moral sense because they do not appeal to it. The treatment of sex is intellectual rather than emotional; over passion is thrown a dry light altogether passionless. "No good person can be justly offended as a spectator, because no good person suffers on the stage." It is not difficult to see how such a thesis would offend the hard-headed Macaulay, but Lamb has interpreted correctly the term "artificial comedy" and has shown beyond doubt how Restoration drama should be played. Out of paradox has come once more a new truth.

It is useful at times to call attention to the solidity of Lamb's judgment, for under the spell of his quaint obliquities it is easy to minimize the reach and vigor of his perceptions. He sticks close to common things, to "sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candlelight, and fireside conversations." And because he approaches men and books through the common realities, he has illuminated his writings with a beauty and an understanding that will last for more centuries than one.

*by Donald MacCampbell*

## MEMPHIS AS MECCA

**BEALE STREET.** By G. W. Lee: New York, Robt. O. Ballou. 1934. 296 pp.

It is an erroneous belief that, where opposite sides of an issue are defended, one or the other must needs be entirely in possession of the right, for questions of right and wrong depend too frequently upon simple matters of geographic position and intellectual environment. "Right" is largely the result of convention, and conventions are presumably established in order to bring to the greatest number of people in a particular section of the world the fullest amount of comfort and satisfaction. Therefore, considering the problem of the Negro in this country, it is just as natural and proper for the Southern white to feel as he does about it, as it is for the Northern white to assume a diametrically opposite stand. No amount of debate or discussion will efface the truth

from the fact that when a group of people fight solely to establish or to maintain their rights they are incontestably right. What then about the colored people themselves? In the South are they just as much entitled to *establish* their particular rights—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—as are the whites to *maintain* theirs—which, in addition to these three privileges, is the right as settlers of the country and prime agents in its development to remain in control of its destiny? Tongue-wagging alone, be it never so eloquently done, is certainly not going to adjust this serious problem. What most is needed is psychological insight through sociological investigation in order to ascertain how alien races, with little in common, can possess their respective rights at the same time and in the same place. The sadistic barbarisms of the Ku Klux Klan, with its hordes of be-sheeted fanatics, will never relieve the situation; nor will any amount of sentimentalized chatter on the part of the safely detached Northerner who, since he once thought little enough of burning witches, would not today—were a critical situation to recommend it—shudder at the idea of an occasional lynching himself. Tolerant examination and an attempt at mutual understanding between the two races of the South is perhaps the shortest cut to an harmonious solution of the problem. And the easiest way for the Southerner to go about it—perhaps the only way—is to read what the more voluble and discerning members of the Negro race have the frankness to say about themselves. Even the most illiterate among them can possibly know better what a black man thinks and feels than can a member of another race; why, then, can not an intelligent and literate Negro be a dependable source of information regarding the nature and characteristics of his own people? Such a man is George W. Lee, but one of a number of Negroes who of late have been writing lucidly and informatively about their own kind.

Mr. Lee's book is an accurate and interesting account of colored life on one of the most famous streets in the country: Beale Street in Memphis where, according to the author, the popular blues began, and where in its urban form one may reasonably expect to find a representative picture of New World Africa. Mr. Lee's knowledge of Memphis history is sufficiently broad to warrant from the outset the respect which the book itself

needs must command. What renders it especially readable is the fact that to a considerable extent his manner of approach is rather that of a novelist than of a social historian: with a keen sense of dramatic possibilities, he has adorned his text with stories of Beale Street's most striking personalities and most colorful haunts. Moreover he has done it in a prose which grasps no little of the rhythmic speech and crude earthy poetry so characteristic a part of the people themselves.

Today Beale Street is owned largely by Jews, policed by whites, and enjoyed by the Negroes. It is an "old avenue of gray buildings where golden balls above pawnshops glisten in the sun; where Jewish vendors stretch their racks of clothing across the store fronts, and glib-tongued barkers call to passers-by to come in and view the bargains; where laughter and song ring out from the cafés and dance halls, and electric pianos join with the traffic noise to create a sound triumphant." It is on Beale Street as on State Street, and in Harlem, that "men of African descent are waging a relentless battle to make contact with Western civilization."

To prepare the stage, Mr. Lee takes us back many years before the Civil War to the town of Memphis where as early as 1824 there was a recognized colony of blacks who, themselves beyond the reach of slavery, were permitted to enjoy a quiet freedom within a stone's throw of one of the most famous slave marts in the world. If Negroes in Memphis today are somewhat above the intellectual level of Negroes in other sections of the South it is no doubt as the result of the greater freedom allowed them there in the past—sections of Tennessee having been intensely pro-union at the time of the war, and Tennessee having been among the last of the Southern states to secede. Mr. Lee uses this example to show that there is no physical necessity for the Negro to remain an inferior race. One sees in the North today the result of his freedom from persecution and outside oppression: the number of colored lawyers, doctors, and business men—not to mention artists—speaks for itself. But in the South there must, for the protection of the white man, be a limit to the extent of expansion and control permitted to the black. In the North there are greater business possibilities, greater urban spaces wherein the Negro can be assimilated and be allowed to go his own way

without treading upon the feet of the white population, and without—since there he is numerically weaker—threatening the white man's supremacy of power.

Mr. Lee's book is a record of outstanding colored men and women of every description: from R. R. Church, the most influential politician on Beale Street, to River George, the tall brown roustabout who believed in going and coming as he pleased until the law interfered. There are penitent sinners, witch-doctors, dope-peddlers, business-men, gamblers, bawds, song-writers, actors, blues-singers, and in short the best and the worst of the colored population. The book also provides a detailed account of educational, business, and religious conditions as they exist among the urban Negro in the South. There is a refreshingly scandalous story of how the Klan tried unsuccessfully to demolish the National Negro Insurance Association with policies totaling over one hundred and sixty millions, and how with stubborn courage the Memphis Negroes refused to be intimidated by the rope-and-torch-brigade. Although Mr. Lee is awake to the injustices which have been done his people, he has no illusions about the black race in the South as a whole. In some quarters of Beale Street "the habits and customs of jungle life still linger". But he believes that Beale Street is many years from Africa, and that many have been the changes in the life of the Negro since the first slave ship landed on the Virginia coast in 1619.

Today much of the glamor and romance have departed from the old thoroughfare, and the number of colored people living thereon in dismal circumstances is, according to the author, appalling. "Beale Street is no longer the mecca of many thriving businesses of the Negro. The heavy hand of the depression, the competition of foreigners, have left their mark. The old avenue is still as boisterous and as loud as ever. The electric lights blaze with their usual glow. The orchestras and pianos are still playing the blues while the echoes of jazz float out upon the midnight skies; but the good old days of Beale Street have gone by many years. The thriving businesses once presided over by colored people have vanished like snowflakes upon the sod. Beale Street, in the days of depression, is the burial ground for the ambitions of many a Negro, lured there with high hopes and the dream of a great career." But it will come back, believes Mr. Lee, and the transition through which it is presently going will in the end prove to be of benefit and profit.

by William S. Knickerbocker

## GREAT PROGENITOR

THE ELDER HENRY JAMES. By Austin Warren. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1934. Pp. 268.

Little attention has been given, even by those most competent, to that group of independent thinkers of Central New York who actively assimilated the concepts of the New England Transcendentalists among whom Gerritt Smith and Henry James the elder were prominent. Mr. Hartley Grattan's *Three Jameses* reminded us of the father of William and Henry James but now Austin Warren devotes a book to him "in his own right, both as personality and thinker".

In eight succinctly written and suggestive chapters, Mr. Warren has limned the life and mind of this quiet thinker who, as Arnold said of Gray, "never spoke out". In the gallery of American Originals, Henry James the elder should occupy an important place, moving as he did from stiff Calvinism through Swedenborgianism and Fourierism to a point of view distinctly his own. Primarily, therefore, any biography of such a man would be more of a chart of the movement of his mind than a story of his times or the trifling incidents of his life. Acutely, Mr. Warren discerned this necessity; and, though he relates enough of the external activities to satisfy the biographical frame, he stresses the growth of an independent who perhaps had more affinity with the practical instincts of a George Ripley than he had with the angelisms of an Emerson, an Alcott, or even a Thoreau. "He joined company," writes Mr. Warren, "with Fourier for his attack on civilization and his promise of a new era to be based not upon *morality* but upon the spontaneous expression of human instincts." Yet the elder James was keen enough to perceive the difference between advocacy and practice of ideas: for his own career was as circumspect as any decent Victorian's.

Mr. Warren's method is perilously close to what he himself has facetiously referred to as "the scissors and paste" type. The book consists in large part of quotations from the forgotten and difficult publications of the elder James: but the very fact that the writings are not easily accessible justify Mr. Warren's liberal quotations. The scrap-book effect is avoided by the penetrating comment of the biographer, for Mr. Warren possesses a vivid philosophy of his own which merges at moments when it is sympathetic to James'. In interpreting the thought of the father of the two greater Jameses, Mr. Warren says: "When men are ready for it, and the new order comes, it will be a *total simul*. As specific reforms, by arresting social disease, delay the death of the moribund world, so an individual's anticipations of the new world are ineffectual, albeit dramatic, gestures."

This splendid treatment of a powerful but neglected American personality deserves the thoughtful reading of the discriminate.

*by Frederick Horner Bunting*

## SOME QUESTIONS FOR MR. CHASE

**THE ECONOMY OF ABUNDANCE.** By Stuart Chase. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1934.

There are few writers, if any, in the field of economics who can match Mr. Chase's style in point of color and vigor. This was as true in 1925 (*The Tragedy of Waste*) as it is today. The content and purpose of Mr. Chase's works have also maintained a certain uniformity: throughout the past decade he has been describing the capitalistic business system after the unorthodox manner

of Thorstein Veblen, trenchant and satirical, with the avowed hope of making people see the monstrous waste inevitably involved in our present way of doing business and the resultant necessary major operation on our system, if there is to be anything like economic justice for all. That the terms of Mr. Chase's plan to change our productive and distributive systems are too vague to do more than stimulate thought, and that he does not sufficiently consider the sociological problems which would result from immediate acceptance by the community of his proposals, ought not to obscure the fact that he renders a great service to economics and to the public by challenging the *status quo* and by discussing public problems in language which even the uninitiated layman can understand.

In *The Economy of Abundance*, the author's point of departure is the fact that although the *per capita* increase in energy (steam, electricity, etc.) during the past hundred years has been about forty-fold, which should have resulted in a ten-fold improvement in the general standard of living, there has actually been hardly more than a two-fold improvement. The reason for this industrial and distributive inefficiency, says Mr. Chase, is inextricably bound up with the Capitalistic system, a system which is founded upon 'vendibility' instead of 'servicability', upon individual caprice instead of social planning. Among the ways in which the ample stores of available energy are needlessly dissipated are: (1) the construction of plant in wrong places, involving needless cross-hauling; (2) the operation of competitive establishments, few of which are often run at capacity production; (3) competitive small-scale farming; (4) destruction of finished goods to keep prices up (e.g. fruits and vegetables); (5) exportation of goods abroad, that is loans, which are never repaid. All of these things, and Mr. Chase lists others besides, exist because sellers are trying to make profits instead of trying to give people what they want and can use. Quoting Mr. Chase: "A market in the capitalistic sense is not a place where people want things; it is a place where people who have money are able to buy things." And several times during the past generation or so there have been periods during which there has not been enough money in the hands of would-be purchasers to buy what the markets had to offer. The worst of these periods was also the

most recent—1930 to 1933. The reason for this occasional scarcity of mass purchasing power provides the second stage in Mr. Chase's argument.

From the first quarter of the nineteenth century to about 1880, commodities were manufactured by machines for the most part. In the transition from handicraft economy to machine economy, many workers were deprived of their means of livelihood, but before long there were more jobs than ever before because the construction of machines, railroads, steamships, and other modern devices required the services of great numbers of workmen. Late in the nineteenth century, however, the Machine Age began to give way to the Power Age—the age in which machines are manufactured and operated by electric current instead of by men. Electric power is causing technological unemployment by making production more or less automatic. This power takes over not only the physical work but also much of the mental work heretofore performed by man. Mr. Chase cites many instances showing that fewer and fewer men can produce more and more goods as time goes on. Since the World War this technological unemployment has increased at a high rate, which promises to continue. As men become unemployed, their purchasing power decreases, unless they are supplied with money by means of a dole or depreciated currency, which means are only palliative, not fundamentally corrective. And as mass purchasing power declines there arises an *appearance* of over-production. The truth is, according to Mr. Chase, that this apparent over-production would vanish if people had enough money to buy the consumers' goods they would like to have.

The capitalistic system was fairly well adapted to an economy of Scarcity because under it an increase in production was possible only by making use of a proportionate increase in the number of laborers. That meant that consumer purchasing power increased fast enough to buy the increased product. Now, unless we can somehow keep production and consumption moving together, says Mr. Chase, we shall find ourselves starving to death in a land of plenty. It is his belief that we must discard the entire capitalistic formula as being inadequate to an economy of Abundance. Temporarily we may resort to several expedients and thereby put off the collapse of capitalism but, Mr. Chase insists, collapse is ulti-

mately certain. A good sized war would take up much of the slack in consumption; but even if it did not wipe out civilization it would add to our already top-heavy debt burden. Devaluing the dollar is another expedient, but its effect as an improver of purchasing power is dubious, and it has, besides, already been tried. The sudden rise of several great new industries like the railroads, automobiles and radios would also stimulate business and increase both employment and mass purchasing power. But regardless of all expedients, we shall soon be faced with masses of unemployed workers and thousands of bankrupt businesses, if we persist in following the capitalistic formula, for the simple reason that electric power now does the work which formerly required man power.

Our salvation, says Mr. Chase, lies in the direction of State capitalism or outright socialization. As has been suggested at the beginning of this review, it is here that Mr. Chase's weakness appears—in his constructive proposals. In the first part of his book, he suggests that all the nation's industries should be taken over and reorganized by a General Staff of technicians. They could, he says, within a decade increase production and distribution of finished goods enough to raise the general standard of living "thrice above a good healthy minimum" (p. 42). And again, in the last chapter, he gives as one of the eighteen "technological imperatives" the centralization of government: "A working dictatorship over industry is indicated, if the plant is to be efficiently operated. Technical performance cannot be subject to popular vote, but the administrative group from time to time might well be". As to incomes under his plan, we are given no more information than that a minimum standard of living will be guaranteed to all, regardless of work performed, and no one will be allowed to receive much more than ten times as much as the least. How this General Staff is to be elected or appointed to office and exactly how wage schedules and salaries are to be set, we are not told. Nor are we told how bureaucratic inefficiency and political graft, which are bad enough under the present system but which under State capitalism would have in infinitely greater scope of operation, are to be avoided.

Well, we *must* be told, Mr. Chase! We, the men in the street, the tax-payer, the ordinary voter—we recognize, especially since

you have so clearly and forcefully shown us, the criminal waste involved, perhaps inevitably, in our present business system, and we want to see that waste stopped. We should like to have a standard of living "thrice above a good healthy minimum" guaranteed us, even if we should have to work for it! And your writings stimulate our thoughts, fire our imaginations, and raise our hopes. We are not reactionary; indeed, we welcome change. But our schooling has taught us a sceptical attitude toward vague generalities. Why not give us a rough outline of your plan for assembling this staff of technicians? We take it that the executives of this General Staff will have more power over the rest of us than, say, the governors of the States in which we live. If they are to be elected by the present voters, what is to prevent demagogues like Huey Long from running the nation's business? Perhaps you would provide that not only the technicians but also the voters must in order to vote pass competency examinations. But we can only speculate on this vital point, since you do not tell us. It astonishes some of us that you and Mr. Norman Thomas *et al.* put such faith as you do in the efficacy of mere mechanical reorganization to bring about a better state of things. Sometimes reorganization improves business, sometimes it does not; and since under universal suffrage everything depends upon the intelligence of the average voter, which is not notably high, you will have to convince us either that your General Staff will be responsible to an electorate possessing more than average intelligence, or else give us some sound reasons for thinking that the graft, corruption, sloth, red tape, arrogance, and all-round inefficiency which beset and debilitate most of our State and Federal organizations will, in spite of universal suffrage, somehow fade away under your proposed Government by a Staff of Technicians. Mind you, we are not categorically denying the possibility of improving things by reorganization; only, we think you should meet the objections stated above.

And then, Mr. Chase, another objection to your Government by a Staff of Technicians lurks in our minds. When you formulate for us a clearer description of this Staff of Technicians, perhaps we shall be able to discard our second objection, which is in the nature of a fear—a fear that your technicians will be specialists of the type which the Spanish statesman, Ortega y Gassett, very

properly condemns: learned ignoramuses. They are, to quote this Spanish writer, "formally ignorant of all that does not enter into [their] specialty." They are ignorant "not in the fashion of the ignorant man, but with all the petulance of one who is learned in his own special line." The one 'technician' President we have had cannot be said to have rendered his country distinguished service. In other words, Mr. Chase, the technicians of your Staff would have to be considerably more than mere technicians if we are to have that standard of living which will be "thrice above a good healthy minimum".

Those are some of the reasons why many of us will try to keep the old tug Capitalism afloat. But try as we will, you say, she is nevertheless doomed to sink before long. Well, it may be so, but, if so, it is to be hoped that the technicians will give some thought—beginning right now—to the leisure time problem which their superior methods of production and distribution will produce. You have acknowledged that a maximum work-week of twenty-five hours for everybody would leave more than twice that number of daylight hours on peoples' hands. Now most persons would be embarrassed with fifty hours of leisure time per week. You say you hope they will use that time in developing the arts, the sciences, and their minds. The most that can be reasonably hoped is that instead of shooting their neighbors up just for the hell of it, they will elect to spend more time at the movies, football games, and poker tables. The Masses feel no constraint of duty in the matter of improving themselves and the society in which they live. Under what you would call the pseudo-scarcity formula which Capitalism is guided by, the Masses are forced to make some little improvements in themselves occasionally. With this outer compulsion gone, or at least if it goes too quickly, they will feel no inner impulsion to improve. Well, if they do not improve, Mr. Chase, they will degenerate; and when they degenerate, we shall find the Economy of Abundance gone and in its stead another Economy of Scarcity . . . if anything.

by E. M. Kayden

## REALISM—PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

THE HOUR OF DECISION. By Oswald Spengler. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1934. Pp. 230.

MORAL MAN AND IMMORAL SOCIETY. By Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1933. Pp. 284.

REFLECTIONS ON THE END OF AN ERA. By Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1934. Pp. 302.

Before the World War the eloquent General von Bernhardi bruted Germany's hour of decision to choose between world-dominion and downfall. After the war Oswald Spengler accepted the downfall as a fact and generalized his country's ills into one universal "decline of the West". To-day, it is again the hour of decision; Germany is again the chosen among the nations, the hope of the Caesars, the type of the will-to-power. With much mysticism and more naïveté, with a great show of apparent philosophy combined with the prejudices of a Prussian general, in staccato style, it is declared that the hour of Germany has come, while other nations are dismissed as barbaric, or tartar, or decadent, or without a future. And the sources of Spengler's historic information are either *The Decline of the West* or his *Political Writings*. He is the symbol, if anything, of the general reaction against the liberalism and the enlightenment achieved within the last two centuries, and an index of the corruption of social propaganda in Germany to-day. For Spengler, the seizure of power by the Nazis did not constitute a danger. He despises the masses and the intellectuals. His appeal is to sentiment. He likes, in particular, the bombast of the sporting page. His favorite phrase, "Man is a beast of prey". The blond beast, the statesman and the conqueror, must save the state from the "human vermin" of socialist labor leaders, priests, jurists, and professors. Every form of tax-

ation is deliberate plunder of the strong and able; there must be a return to the twelve-hour day for labor; democracy is bolshevism; even the Christian labor movement is branded as "Catholic bolshevism". The true soldier must despise the civilian. Caesar despises the masses, the sciences and the arts, and will lead the return of the German nation from the darkness of theory and poetry and music that has lain over the nation since 1648. Spengler is a realist looking backwards, to despotism and slavery.

Reverend Reinhold Niebuhr is also a realist, unflinching and ruthless in his logic, indignant against the flabby optimisms of professional Christians, bitter against the romanticists and materialists of social culture, but learned, brilliant, and forthright in his own thinking. His central theme in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* is that man, as an individual, has through the ages past developed ethical aspirations, and fairly adequate ethical procedures, but that he has failed to extend them to a society of increasing size and complexity. He sorrowfully concedes that social adjustment to new needs does not and will not take place without coercion. He is not a philosophical anarchist, he accepts society as a necessity, as the best instrument of progress in the world, but cannot evade the fact that human nature is dual and tragic, and that evil tends to grow with the size of the community, with the division of labor and the differentiation of classes. Though a religious man, he deprecates the technique of moral indignation; his essential thesis is that the moral standards that prevail in the relations between individuals are not meaningful or valid in the relations between politico-economic communities, that with growing social complexity there is less of reason to check and guide human selfish impulses, less of ability at work to comprehend the needs of society, and less capacity for self-control and self-transcendence. Therefore, he concludes, the relations between groups must forever remain political rather than ethical, and conflict must remain a method of social progress, power challenging power. And as Marxist and psychological realist, Niebuhr has no hesitation in facing the fact of violence in the historic process, and to appeal to violence in the name of some higher order of social justice, or, to be more specific, to demand a strategy of non-violent resistance which he distinguishes from mere non-resistance.

as a way of revolutionary progress. The real problem of violence is one simply of the possibilities of establishing justice, which is a question to be answered empirically in the light of class strategy, in the light of the "illusion" commanding the ethical aspirations and loyalties of men. And, to-day, "the most important of these illusions is that the collective life of mankind can achieve perfect justice."

I find it difficult to believe that Niebuhr is a propagandist of violence or revolution. Rather I see him as one impatient with hollow moralisms, fearful of reaction in the enterprises of mankind, and, as the essential forthright thinker that he is, going forth sadly but unflinchingly to meet the fate of man, the tragic beauty of progress. He is always at hand to caution the reader that "the needs of an adequate political strategy do not obviate the necessity of cultivating the strictest individual moral discipline and the most uncompromising idealism." In other words, he is ready to pay the price for his idealism; he refuses to toy tentatively and vicariously with dreams of justice in some distant future. He can lift himself, after a manful struggle with materialistic interpretations of history and social conflicts, above the world of nature, above systems of collective relationships in order to possess his soul. But, for this right of the spirit, he "can no longer buy the highest satisfactions of the individual life at the expense of social injustice". Well, the Church must take seriously this all too, too sensitive man. He is not of the world, but seeing that he walks in the world and eats the bread of the world, he must needs accept the struggles of the world and the illusion of some perfect order. All he asks to know, Whose struggles, whose illusion? And he finds that the collectivist has the true, and for the moment the most valuable, illusion of social justice, a "sublime madness of the soul". And thus he accepts (with the reservations and mental anguish of the Christian soldier), for "nothing but such madness will do battle with malignant power and spiritual wickedness in high places". Niebuhr urges action, injustice must be resisted, reaction met with violence, if violence there must be; politically it only remains to find that form of action that will not destroy the meager resources of reason and morality which society owns. I interpret this to mean that we must be reasonable, have faith in

the supreme cause, hold fast to the illusion of social justice, trust in the Lord, and keep our powder dry.

The second book of Niebuhr is a book of essays but loosely related, yet carrying to certain maturity the reflections of the earlier book. The events in Germany have no doubt steeled at once his realism and his sense of the eternal spirit in human affairs. He makes even a more strenuous effort to find a balance between reason and impulse, religion and politics, collectivism and individualism, democracy and revolution, communism and Christianity; he is even more indignant with shallow liberalism, with sentimental spirituality, with uncritical assumptions of democracy and progress that are lacking in a sense of direction. Justly so. Yet I surmise that Niebuhr is not a fighting leader, that his courage begins and ends in the comfort of his study. It is not given to a philosopher to take up the sword. His *Reflections* etch deeper the dualism of his previous work, the eternal struggle between the nature and the spirit of man, the sense of tragedy or tension between the two poles separating man's spiritual aspirations. He believes that in our times the triumph of nature is imminent, by reason of the internal contradictions in the industrial system itself and of the dominant position of science; yet he is fearful that the experimental impulse of science would be carried into the domain of politics and social life accompanied by revenge and violence. He fears the steady march of Fate. Yet he must admit that to-day religion alone cannot save the world, for historical Christianity has acquiesced in every order of injustice. And as in his earlier work he was not averse to looking back to some mythical period of the Middle Ages of imagined stability and beauty, so now the deeper realization of man's dualism forces him to accept the ideal of pure or classical Christianity. Niebuhr's social radicalism is thus tempered with religious conservatism. Christianity must face the Marxist ideology without surrendering its own religious claims, and the tension between nature and spirit must remain to the end of time. He holds that the immediate task belongs to Marxism, but its success would be incomplete in a dual world of nature and spirit. The spiritual demand of man must in the end assert its sovereignty, but only after society has achieved a social system compatible with the nature of our modern

technology and the demands of social justice. In the light of the eternal, pure spirit "creates tensions which cannot be completely resolved in moral endeavor . . . Whenever the tension between spirit and nature is fully felt the aesthetic motif in religion arises to compete with the ethical urge. Men find it necessary not only to approximate perfection ethically but to adjust themselves to an imperfect world in terms of aesthetic insights which, in classical religion, are expressed in the experience of grace".

**RUSSIA, YOUTH AND THE PRESENT-DAY WORLD.** By F. E. Williams, M.D. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. Pp. 270. 1934. \$2.50.

This distinguished American psychiatrist went to Russia to make further studies in mental hygiene, to look for neuroses and psychoses and other "difficult" cases of psychological unadjustment. He went a second time. He did not find these typical diseases of civilization. But he discovered that the decline in mental disease was directly bound up with the system of economic, therefore psychological, security, with education of a citizenship in social goals and purposes, with an integrated social life. He found that Russia does not know drawn-out contests for proper housing, social insurance, pure food laws, pure drugs, that these are not matters for political and social contests. He was particularly fascinated by the position of women and children in society —the organization of life about hearty and useful life-relationships. Dr. Williams is the first American to report that the essential achievements of the Soviets are not industrial, which is the usual boast of Russians themselves, but psychological and spiritual, that industry is simply the means to a worthy social and personal end—"the welfare of the individual, every man, woman and child, in the terms of health, education and the development of talents."

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